



# AGENDA

## Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, 21 April 2026

**Time:** 1:00 pm

**Location:** Tūi/Kōwhai Room  
Waikato Regional Council  
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

**Members:** Cr Warren Maher – Chair  
Cr Mich'eal Downard – Deputy Chair  
Cr Robert Cookson  
Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith  
Cr Chris Hughes  
Cr Liz Stolwyk

## CE Employment and Remuneration Committee

### *Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere* | Terms of Reference

**1. Mana ā-Ture | Status**

This Committee was established by Council under clause 30(1)(a) of [Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002](#). It is a discretionary committee that can be created or disestablished by Council resolution.

**2. Ngā Kawenga | Responsibilities**

The Committee is responsible for advising Council on all matters related to the Chief Executive's employment. This includes overseeing recruitment, remuneration, performance management, relationship and succession planning.

**3. Ngā Apatono | Powers**

The Committee has the following powers required to carry out its responsibilities:

**3.1. Recruitment and Appointment**

- a. Recommending to Council when required, the process for recruiting, selecting, and appointing a Chief Executive.

**3.2. Performance Management**

- a. Developing, in consultation with the Chief Executive, an Annual Performance Agreement for the upcoming financial year – incorporating key performance indicators, and recommend it to Council no later than June each year.
- b. Monitoring the Chief Executive's performance by receiving quarterly review reports that measure progress against the Annual Performance Agreement. The Committee provides feedback to the Chief Executive and reports quarterly to Council on performance outcomes in relation to the agreed key performance indicators.
- c. Negotiating any amendments, additions, or changes to the Chief Executive's Annual Performance Agreement, subject to final approval by Council.
- d. Conducting the Chief Executive's annual performance review, assessing progress against the Annual Performance Agreement and role competencies. This includes receiving the Chief Executive's annual self-assessment and undertaking any necessary enquiries to evaluate performance thoroughly.
- e. Reporting the outcome of the Chief Executive's annual performance review to Council and make recommendations regarding that outcome for Council's approval.
- f. Providing the Chief Executive with feedback on their performance, including identifying areas for development to support ongoing growth and effectiveness in the role.

**3.3. Remuneration and Employment Terms**

- a. Reviewing and recommending to Council any appropriate amendments or adjustments to the Chief Executive's remuneration and terms of employment that arise from the end-of-year performance review.
- b. Negotiating with the Chief Executive any amendments or adjustments to their terms and conditions of employment and remuneration outside the annual review process. This includes changes to the Chief Executive's job description, subject to Council's final approval.

**3.4. Employment Review and Reappointment**

- a. Conduct and complete a review of employment at least 6 months prior to the end of the Chief Executive's first term of employment (LGA 2002, Schedule 7, clause 35) and recommend to Council whether or not the Chief Executive should be appointed for a

second term of up to two years or that the position be declared vacant (LGA 2002, Schedule 7, clause 34).

**3.5. Professional Development and Succession Planning**

- a. Establishing, as part of the Annual Performance Agreement, an annual development plan for the Chief Executive. This plan should identify training, learning, and development needs or opportunities aimed at enhancing the Chief Executive's capability and performance.
- b. Undertaking an annual review of succession planning for the Chief Executive. It also receives reports on succession planning practices for key organisational roles, including the Chief Executive's direct reports, to ensure leadership continuity and capability across the organisation.

**3.6. Oversight**

- a. Receive advice from the Chief Executive prior to appointment or termination of any direct report to the Chief Executive.
- b. Provide the opportunity for Councillors to provide feedback to the annual performance review of the Chief Executive's direct reports.

**3.7. Relationship Management and Complaints**

- a. Considering and advising Council in matters relating to the Chief Executive's job description, employment agreement, performance agreement, and all other related matters relevant to the Chief Executive's employment.
- b. Receiving and assess complaints from the Chief Executive about the behaviour of the Chair, subsequently recommending to Council how such complaints should be handled, including potential use of the Code of Conduct.<sup>1</sup>
- c. Receiving and assessing complaints from a Councillor about the Chief Executive and recommend appropriate action to Council.<sup>2</sup>
- d. Recommending or facilitating mediation, relationship coaching, or other resolution processes when there is a breakdown of trust or communication between the Chief Executive and the Chair of Council.
- e. Conducting preliminary investigations into allegations of misconduct, serious misconduct, or other behaviour that may bring the Council into disrepute. The purpose of these investigations is to equip the Committee to make a recommendation to Council on whether a full investigation (and/or Code of Conduct proceedings) should be implemented.

**4. Ngā Tūranga | Membership**

**4.1 Ngā Mema | Members**

The Committee has six members:

- a. Chair of Council
- b. Deputy-Chair of Council
- c. Four councillors appointed by Council

**4.2 Ūpoko me te Ūpoko Tuarua | Chair and Deputy-Chair**

The Chair and Deputy-Chair of Council serve as the Chair and Deputy-Chair of this Committee.

**5. Tokamatua | Quorum**

Two members. Refer clause 23(3)(b) of [Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002](#).

**6. Ngā Tikanga Pōti | Voting**

- a. Decisions are made by majority vote of members present.

---

<sup>1</sup> Should the Chief Executive receive a complaint about a Councillor, they would in the first instance raise it with the Chair of Council.

<sup>2</sup> Should Councillors wish to make a complaint about staff, these should be raised directly with the Chief Executive in the first instance.

- b. If votes are equal, the Chair has both a deliberative and casting vote.

*Refer to clause 24 of [Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act](#) and [Standing Orders](#).*

**7. Ngā Hui i te Tau | Frequency of meetings**

The committee shall meet five times annually, or as required to fulfil its responsibilities. Additional meetings may be called by the committee chair and/or the Chief Executive.

---

## Order Of Business

<b>1</b>	<b>Karakia Timatanga</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Confirmation of Agenda</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Disclosures of Interest</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt</b> .....	<b>6</b>
	Nil.....	6
<b>6</b>	<b>General Items</b> .....	<b>7</b>
6.1	People Strategy Update .....	7
6.2	WRC Recruitment Practice .....	19
<b>7</b>	<b>Public Excluded Items</b> .....	<b>64</b>
7.1	Chief Executive KPIs Quarter Three Update.....	64
7.2	Success of Organisation changes - Chief Executive KPI2.....	64
7.3	Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process .....	64
<b>8</b>	<b>Karakia Whakamutunga</b> .....	<b>66</b>

**1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA**

<b>Whakataka te hau ki te uru</b>	<b>Cease o winds from the west</b>
<b>Whakataka te hau ki te tonga</b>	<b>Cease o winds from the south</b>
<b>Kia mākinakina ki uta</b>	<b>Bring calm breezes over the land</b>
<b>Kia mātaratara ki tai</b>	<b>Bring calm breezes over the sea</b>
<b>E hī ake ana te atakura</b>	<b>And let the red-tipped dawn come</b>
<b>He tio</b>	<b>With a touch of frost</b>
<b>He Huka</b>	<b>A sharpened air</b>
<b>He hau hū</b>	<b>And promise of a glorious day</b>
<b>Tīhei mauri ora!</b>	<b>Behold we live</b>

**2 APOLOGIES**

**3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

**4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Members are reminded of the need to be aware of maintaining a clear separation between personal interests and duties and their role as an elected member.

If any member has an interest that creates an actual, or could be perceived to create, a conflict in relation to any item on the agenda, it is recommended that this be disclosed.

**5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT**

Nil

## 6 GENERAL ITEMS

### 6.1 PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

**Rā | Date:** 18 March 2026

**Kaituhi | Author:** Georgina Whittenham, Human Resources Manager

**Kaituku | Authoriser:** Chris McLay, Chief Executive

#### TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. This report provides the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee (CEERC) with an update on progress against He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy 2025–2029 for the 2025–26 year to date.

#### KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Overall progress against Our People Strategy (PS) 2025–2029 remains on track, with strong and tangible progress across multiple priority focus areas as of March 2026.

Of the 19 People Strategy initiatives identified for delivery in 2025–26:

- 13 initiatives are on track and progressing well.
  - 6 initiatives are progressing more slowly, primarily where delivery is dependent on system implementation, external partners, or broader organisational readiness.
3. Significant achievements during the year to date include:
    - Strengthened recruitment and onboarding foundations, aligned with the Infor Consolidation programme
    - Delivery and refresh of key leadership and self-leadership development programmes
    - Embedding of the Health and Safety Strategy, supporting improved leadership visibility, assurance, and organisational capability
    - Establishment of enabling foundations for culture, performance, and employee experience uplift, including new engagement and measurement approaches.
  4. Where progress has been phased, this reflects a deliberate focus on sequencing delivery to ensure quality outcomes, effective embedding of core foundations, and alignment with organisational change activity. These initiatives remain actively managed and are expected to progress as planned once enabling dependencies are resolved.
  5. Overall, delivery of the PS continues to support the Chief Executive’s KPIs relating to organisational change, workforce stability, system embedment, and organisational effectiveness.

**TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

That the report *People Strategy Update* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.


## HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

6. He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy 2025–2029 provides the strategic framework for workforce capability, culture, leadership, and wellbeing at Waikato Regional Council (WRC).
7. Delivery of the strategy is enabled through annual People and Capability (P&C) and directorate operational plans and P&C partners closely with leaders and teams to support delivery of strategic initiatives cross the organisation. Progress reported in this paper reflects the position as of March 2026.

### People Strategy 2025–26: Progress by Strategic Focus Area

(For more detail on initiatives please refer to the summary table in the Appendix.)

#### 8. Being an Employer of Choice


 Employee lifecycle focus: Attract | Recruit  
**Overall status:** On track

Significant effort this year has been directed towards stabilising and improving recruitment foundations in response to sustained recruitment demand and in alignment with the Infor Consolidation project.

#### 9. Key progress includes:

- The Recruitment Excellence project is well underway, focused on system (Infor), process, role clarity, and management capability uplift. The Infor Consolidation elements of the project are expected to be completed by August 2026. This piece of work is tracking positively, and it is expected that significant improvements to the system (Global HR) and instruction materials will have been delivered by the end of the project. This will reduce administrative burden for both P&C and managers leading to a more productive use of time.
- Integration of the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and He Whare Taumatua | Our Māori Employment Strategy principles into recruitment practices.

#### 10. Setting People Up for Success

 Employee lifecycle focus: Onboard | Develop  
**Overall status:** On track

Significant effort has been directed towards improving onboarding to support a consistent experience for all new employees, aligned with the Infor Consolidation project.

#### 11. In addition, progress continues across leadership and learning initiatives, including:

- Refresh and launch of the Be My Best self-leadership programme.

- Procurement and design of a refreshed Leadership Development Programme (26 supplier applications reduced to a final shortlist of three, with a Tenders Board decision targeted for 7 May 2026).
- Drafting and socialisation of the Learning and Development Strategy with Senior Leadership Teams, alongside a broader review of L&D processes and documentation.
- Work has been sequenced to prioritise initiatives with the greatest immediate impact on leadership effectiveness and organisational stability.

## 12. Investing in a Culture of Performance



Employee lifecycle focus: Engage | Develop

**Overall status:** On track

Delivery in this area has focused on establishing strong foundations and setting future direction.

### 13. Progress includes:

- Launch of the People Strategy, with incorporation into aligned strategic processes (including refresh of the People and Capability Strategic Risk).
- Procurement of a new employee experience measurement platform, with supplier visits scheduled for early April.
- Ongoing improvement of people reporting within existing system parameters.
- Strengthening performance management guidance and manager support.
- Reframing the culture programme to align leadership, engagement, and performance.

### 14. This work directly supports organisational performance and change-related KPIs.

## 15. Prioritising Health, Safety and Wellbeing



Employee lifecycle focus: Engage | Develop

**Overall status:** On track

Active embedding of the Health and Safety Strategic Plan 2025–2029, WRC Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and the Health & Safety Management System (HSMS) continues.

Work has been intentionally sequenced to prioritise initiatives that lift leadership capability, strengthen assurance, and manage organisational risk.

### 16. Progress includes:

- Launch of the Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) across the organisation.
- Focused managers learning modules to support performance uplift. The learning modules are delivered every 6 weeks to increase leaders' visibility, accountability, and delivery of assigned assurance activities.
- Continued progress on hazard and risk management and employee engagement.

- Development of the one-page Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2025–2029, which distilled priorities into three focused, values-aligned areas to support accessibility, understanding, and ownership across the organisation.
- Review and endorsement of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (November 2025), which continues to guide HSMS uplift.
- Annual review of the Health and Safety Strategic Risk 4.
- Three key Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy commitments have been deliberately prioritised to translate policy intent into practice and strengthen HSMS delivery. The three focus areas are: eliminating hazards and mitigating risk, ensuring appropriate resourcing, and strengthening open conversation, consultation, engagement, and participation.

## 17. Being Future Ready

Employee lifecycle focus: Develop | Engage | Offboard



**Overall status:** Progressing, with phased delivery

Support for change leadership has been the primary focus in this area and has progressed in a staged way, recognising organisational capacity.

## 18. Progress includes:

- Development and delivery of the Navigating Change programme at organisational leadership and people leader levels (over 80% of people leaders attended).
- Navigating Change – Leading Self is underway but progressing more slowly due to quality issues with partner-provided materials and internal resource constraints; revisions are underway.
- A ‘Guideline for Changes Impacting Employee Roles’ has been drafted as a continuous improvement response to change management and has been circulated to unions and the Executive Management Team for discussion. This will provide an enterprise wide consistent approach.

## Delivery Context and Organisational Environment

Delivery of People Strategy initiatives in 2025–26 has occurred within a dynamic organisational environment requiring careful prioritisation, sequencing and risk management.

The P&C team itself has been through a period of forming and norming, with a largely new team recruited over the past 24 months, established, and now stabilising. It is pleasing to see a significant lift in technical capability in the P&C Team following this recruitment.

## 19. Starting from a position of understanding our current state, identifying the gaps to best practice, a strong focus on supporting WRC to lift performance and productivity, and improving safety, the P&C functions have evolved to a position where business as usual (BAU) is actively managed alongside strategic improvement initiatives.

## 20. Key factors include:

- Recruitment pressure: Recruitment activity remains elevated (111 new appointments have been made since 1 July 2025), with multiple directorates continuing to carry vacancies following organisational changes. Average time to fill roles continues to exceed benchmark levels, reflecting market conditions and WRC's devolved recruitment accountability model.
  - Employment relations, performance and change support: Employment relations (ER) and performance management activity in 2025–26 is higher than in previous years, requiring intensive and careful management to mitigate legal, reputational, and organisational risk. Since 1 July 2025, 48 cases have been managed, including eight actively managed exits. In addition, several organisational change processes have required varying levels of internal P&C support and are expected to continue as part of BAU service delivery.
  - Human Resources (HR) Organisational Development (OD) and Learning & Development (L&D) Business As Usual (BAU) “big rocks”: In parallel with strategy delivery, P&C teams are progressing collective bargaining, remuneration process improvements, continuous policy and process evolution in line with legislation and best practice, system optimisation, learning and development delivery, and improvements to service delivery and reporting.
  - Health and Safety system uplift: Significant investment has been required to embed ISO 45001 as the foundation of the Health and Safety Management System (HSMS). This has involved lifting organisational capability, clarifying roles and accountabilities, improving the quality and consistency of reporting, and strengthening assurance practices. While essential to improving health and safety performance and compliance, this work has occurred alongside sustained BAU demand and required careful prioritisation and sequencing.
21. Collectively, these factors have required a disciplined approach to People Strategy delivery to ensure ambition is matched by sustainable capacity and effective risk control.

## 22. Overall Assessment

As of March 2026:

- Of the 19 People Strategy initiatives identified, 13 are on track and 6 are progressing at reduced pace in a phased manner to ensure success.
- People Strategy delivery remains aligned with strategic intent.
- Delivery sequencing appropriately reflects operational demand and workforce risk.
- No material risks to delivery are identified.
- The strategy continues to support the Chief Executive's performance objectives relating to organisational change, system embedment, and operational effectiveness.

## WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

23. The People Strategy continues to provide a strong and coherent framework for strengthening workforce capability, culture, performance and wellbeing across WRC. Progress across all initiatives to date reflects a balanced and pragmatic approach to delivery, recognising both strategic ambition and operational realities.

24. Implementation of the HSMS continues to progress well, with measurable improvements evident in leadership visibility, assurance activity, and alignment between risk and assurance processes. These improvements provide confidence that organisational capability is lifting over time. While further maturity will continue to be built, delivery remains on track against key objectives and supports broader People Strategy outcomes relating to leadership, safety, and organisational effectiveness.
25. Further updates will be provided as initiatives progress and organisational demand evolves.

#### **NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES**

26. [He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy](#) (Doc #33829774)

**Appendix - Summary from 2025-2026 People & Capability Operational Plan**

Focus Area	Priority Initiative	Action	SMART Goal 2025-2026	Progress March 2026
<b>Being an employer of choice</b>	<b>Recruitment excellence</b>	<b>Enhance recruitment experience</b> - System and process improvements to streamline recruitment processes and ensure consistency, quality, and a positive candidate journey.	By August 2026, the Recruitment Excellence project will design and implement a consistent, user-friendly recruitment experience using the Global HR system. The project will enhance the experience for candidates, hiring managers, HR administrators, and authorisers by streamlining processes, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and updating guidance materials. Capability uplift for people leaders (via a Management Essentials: Recruitment module) will be developed and ready to roll out	<p>Note: This action description will be updated in early April following the Infor April update and rescope of the Infor Consolidation project to focus on Global HR elements. As at March 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated recruitment resources (policies, guides, templates, and checklists) are in development, ensuring alignment with Our Māori Employment Strategy   <i>He Whare Taumatua</i> commitments</li> <li>• Recruitment messaging is being aligned with the Employer Value Proposition (EVP) narrative</li> <li>• Engagement with Communications &amp; Marketing is underway to improve the careers webpage</li> <li>• April bi-annual release scope has been locked down</li> <li>• User Acceptance Testing (UAT) has been completed and preparation for the April release finalised</li> <li>• April learner support materials are progressing</li> <li>• Release communications planning is underway</li> <li>• Low-impact feature requests are being implemented</li> <li>• EVP elements are being incorporated into recruitment processes.</li> </ul>
	<b>Recruitment excellence</b>	<b>Embed our Employee Value Proposition (EVP)</b> – integrate WRC’s EVP and brand messaging across all recruitment touchpoints.	By 30 April 2026, embed WRC’s Employee Value Proposition across all recruitment touchpoints, including job advertisements, the careers site, candidate communications, and hiring manager guidance	Incorporated into the Recruitment Excellence project and broader BAU recruitment review and improvement activity
	<b>Culture of advocacy</b>	<b>Improve exit feedback process</b> – enhance exit interview processes to gather actionable insights and inform retention strategies.	By 30 June 2026, improve exit interview processes so that at least 75% of completed exits capture actionable feedback that informs retention strategies	Currently on hold. A standardised process and review will occur following completion of the Employee Experience Measures procurement process. We continue to run our normal exit interview practice.

Setting up People for Success	<b>Capability through learning</b>	<b>Deliver robust onboarding</b> – launch a comprehensive onboarding experience that supports success from day one.	By August 2026, design and implement a consistent, role-appropriate onboarding experience across all WRC directorates, supported by a central toolkit, manager guides, and an onboarding experience measure. Success is defined as ≥90% of new starters reporting (within 30 days) that they feel welcomed, supported, and clear about their role and contribution. Capability uplift for people leaders (via a Management Essentials: Onboarding module) will be developed.	<p>Note: This action description will be updated in early April following the Infor April update and rescope of the Infor Consolidation project to focus on Global HR elements. As at March 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition management evaluation and testing of Global HR is underway to validate onboarding processes</li> <li>• Cross-boarding and off-boarding are being reviewed as secondary components</li> <li>• Required system and configuration updates are being documented</li> <li>• MoSCoW prioritisation is being used to identify critical enhancements and implement low-impact feature updates where feasible.</li> </ul> <p><b>MoSCoW method:</b>  <b>Must-have:</b> Essential requirements that are critical for project success.  <b>Should-have:</b> Important but not vital requirements that can be included if time and resources allow.  <b>Could-have:</b> Desirable requirements that can enhance the project but are not necessary.  <b>Won't-have:</b> Requirements that are agreed upon as not being included in the current project phase.</p>
	<b>Capability through learning</b>	<b>Develop a learning strategy</b> – review and update L&D documentation and processes.	By 30 June 2026, review and update all Learning and Development information and processes to ensure alignment with L&D strategic priorities, including strategy documents, policies, procedures, and process maps.	Kāinga pages review is underway. Input from the onboarding review is supporting improved understanding of transition management and development planning.
	<b>Capability through learning</b>	<b>Develop a learning strategy</b> – draft and finalise an L&D strategy/framework.	By 30 June 2026, draft, socialise, and finalise a Learning and Development strategy or framework to inform strategic choices about L&D activity and programmes.	The L&D Strategy has been drafted and is being socialised with Senior Leadership Teams.

	<b>Evolve our culture programme</b>	<b>Refresh our culture programme</b> - reinvigorate Kia eke ki tōna taumata   Be Our Best, including leadership development and culture metrics.	Leadership Development Programme Refresh: By 30 June 2026, refresh the Leadership Development Programme by procuring and onboarding an external partner, co-developing programme content, planning implementation, and launching a pilot aligned to the People Strategy.	Slightly behind schedule due to the high volume of supplier responses (26). A shortlist of three has been identified, with show-and-tell sessions scheduled for late March / early April. First pilot programme planned for late June / early July.
	<b>Capability through learning</b>	<b>Develop a learning strategy</b> - create a learning and development framework that builds capability across all levels and functions.	Be My Best Self Programme Refresh: By 30 June 2026, refresh and implement the 'Be My Best' Self-Leadership Programme at Waikato Regional Council by evaluating the pilot, redesigning the programme based on feedback and strategic alignment, and integrating the improved programme into business as usual.	Complete and underway - into BAU
Investing in Culture of Performance	<b>Evolve our culture programme</b>	<b>Refresh our culture programme</b> - reinvigorate Kia eke ki tōna taumata   Be Our Best, including leadership development and culture metrics.	By 30 June reinvigorate WRC's culture programme, Kia eke ki tōna taumata   Be Our Best, by redefining how organisational culture is understood and measured, aligning it with refreshed leadership development and employee engagement approaches.	Initiative is dependent on the Employee Experience Measures RFP and the Leadership Development Programme RFP - revised timeline now in plan. On track to provide update paper for ELT in April.
	<b>Employee Engagement Platform</b>	<b>Employee Engagement Platform procurement:</b> Procure an employee engagement platform to enable employee listening across the lifecycle.	Establish requirements, go to market, select a supplier, and support implementation to ensure a new platform is in place to deliver the 2026 engagement survey, replacing the OCI.	On track supplier show and tell scheduled for early April.
	<b>Strengthen performance foundations</b>	<b>Enable performance growth:</b> improve performance management practices and manager capability.	Update performance management policies, documentation, and processes, and develop Management Essentials: Performance Management and ER training modules	On track. Policies and associated materials approved by ELT. Communications planned for April Managers' Forum. Management Essentials module development underway

	<b>Strengthen performance foundations</b>	<b>Leverage data and technology</b> – improve HR analytics.	By June 2026, implement a centralised HR analytics dashboard to consolidate key workforce metrics, reduce manual reporting by at least 20%, and improve data-driven decision-making.	First Capability assessment underway.
	<b>Launch People Strategy</b>	<b>Implement People Strategy</b>	By 15 December 2025, launch the People Strategy to the organisation with ≥90% of P&C team deliverables aligned and embedded into the operational plan for the remainder of 2025/2026; maintain engagement and alignment thereafter. Incorporation of Strategy into other aligned strategic documentation (e.g. P&C Strategic Risk)	Complete.
<b>Prioritising Health, Safety and Wellbeing</b>	<b>Shape workplace health and safety to harness the full potential of our people</b>	<b>Set Strategic Direction</b> – Health & Safety Strategy 2025–2029	By 30 December 2026, embed the Health and Safety Strategy through alignment with operational plans, education for people managers, delivery of an assurance programme, and integration into onboarding and induction. SafePlus recommendations incorporated into action plans.	Planned rollout of HSMS modules continues. Assurance activities are being established, with SLT walkarounds to commence reporting from June 2026. Governance Plan update to be returned to the CE for sign-off.
	<b>Shape workplace health and safety to harness the full potential of our people</b>	<b>Lead in Safety</b> – Monthly Themes & HSMS Practices	By 30 June 2026, embed key principles and practices of the Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) by delivering targeted monthly safety themes, education sessions, and assurance activities. These activities will strengthen alignment between safety systems and operational practice and increase staff engagement with core HSMS requirements.	Deliver Theme #4; (Event investigation). Managers scheduled to attend L&D calendar training with practical Damstra support sessions provided.

<p><b>Shape workplace health and safety to harness the full potential of our people</b></p>	<p><b>Lead in Safety – Leadership Visibility</b> (SLT Reviews &amp; Insights)</p>	<p>By 30 June 2026, increase leadership visibility and meaningful safety insights by implementing a structured SLT health and safety review and walkaround programme. This will include measurable insights being generated and actioned, supported by consistent reporting, analytics, and regular senior leader participation. Insight from visits will feedback into the H&amp;S management system.</p>	<p>SLT reviews Month 5; with monitor progress underway.</p>
	<p><b>Recognise &amp; Innovate</b> – Safety Recognition &amp; Culture Forums</p>	<p>By 30 June 2026, strengthen WRC’s safety culture by delivering a session for Health &amp; Safety Reps, engagement in their health and safety learning. Forums, expectations, formal recognition process (e.g., Tui Award) that celebrates excellence and innovation in health and safety across the organisation.</p>	<p>Plan and actions being refined.</p>
	<p><b>Invest in Wellbeing</b> – Psychosocial Risk Standard</p>	<p>By 30 June 2026, develop, approve, and implement a workplace standard for managing psychosocial risks at WRC, supported by targeted education and training for people leaders. This will include integration into BAU practices and assurance that the psychosocial risk standard is consistently applied across teams.</p>	<p>Meeting with team scheduled to review approach and resourcing requirements (indicatively 0.2 FTE over 12 months).</p>
<p><b>Being Future Ready</b></p>	<p><b>Lead through change and transformation</b></p>	<p><b>Support change leadership</b> - through the Navigating Change programme.</p> <p>By 30 June 2026, implement the individual contributor stream of the Navigating Change programme and transition all streams into BAU.</p>	<p>Navigating Change – Organisational Leadership and People Leadership programmes have been delivered to over 80% of people leaders. Navigating Change – Leading Self is underway but progressing more slowly than originally expected due to the need to improve partner-provided video materials and competing priorities in L&amp;D. A revised iteration of materials is currently under review.</p>

**ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS**

**Nil**

## 6.2 WRC RECRUITMENT PRACTICE

**Rā | Date:** 7 April 2026

**Kaituhi | Author:** Georgina Whittenham, Human Resources Manager

**Kaituku | Authoriser:** Chris McLay, Chief Executive

### TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. This report provides the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee with an overview of Waikato Regional Council's (WRC) current recruitment practices, the organisational and labour market context in which recruitment is occurring, and the improvement initiatives underway. The report is for information only and supports CEERC's oversight of organisational capability, workforce sustainability, and alignment with WRC's People Strategy. It also acknowledges recruitment practice in the context of WRC's commitment to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, including the objectives of *He Whare Taumatua* – the Māori Employment Strategy.

### KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. WRC's recruitment framework is designed to be fair, robust and evidence based, grounded in clear policy, legislative requirements, and merit-based decision-making. Recruitment is manager-led and supported by People & Capability (P&C), with defined approval points, documentation standards, and safeguards to ensure equitable and consistent appointment outcomes. The underlying framework provides assurance that recruitment decisions are transparent and focused on appointing the person best suited to the role.
3. While the policy framework is sound, current recruitment practice operates within a constrained system environment and a devolved support model that places high demand on manager capability. The Infor Global HR recruitment module is not a purpose-built applicant tracking system and presents usability and reporting limitations, contributing to administrative burden and variable recruitment experience. These challenges are being addressed through the Infor Consolidation Project and a wider programme of recruitment improvement focused on strengthening manager confidence and capability, improving candidate experience, and streamlining process and guidance. The Infor Consolidation project is making positive progress with the Global HR component of Infor. Significant improvements are expected by the end of the project in August 2026, resulting in reduced administrative effort and therefore higher levels of productivity.
4. Recruitment is occurring within a highly competitive labour market, particularly for specialist and senior technical roles such as Manager Infrastructure and Chief Engineer, where candidate supply is limited and competition from other councils and the private sector is strong. These labour market constraints are not unique to WRC but do impact recruitment timeframes and appointment outcomes, reinforcing the importance of having clear processes, capable hiring managers, and a compelling employment offer.
5. Recruitment plays a critical role in delivering WRC's People Strategy *He Manawa Tangata* 2025–2029, including its focus on being future ready and advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. In this context, the report acknowledges alignment with *He Whare*

*Taumatua* – WRC’s Māori Employment Strategy. Consistent with the wider local government sector, WRC has faced challenges attracting Māori applicants into some roles, particularly technical and specialist positions. Ongoing work to strengthen WRC’s position as an employer of choice for Māori sits alongside broader workforce initiatives and the organisation’s employee value proposition, supporting attraction and retention for all. Alongside this targeted focus WRC continues to strengthen its overall Employee Value Proposition for all staff. This includes initiatives such as enhanced wellbeing support and benefits like the sick leave bank.

6. A structured programme of recruitment improvement is underway, aligned with the People Strategy and supported by complementary initiatives including updated recruitment guidance, manager capability development, and the introduction of candidate experience and insight measures. Together, these initiatives are intended to strengthen recruitment practice, reduce administrative burden, and support WRC’s ability to attract and retain capability in a changing and competitive labour market.

**TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

That the report *WRC Recruitment Practice* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.

**HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND**

**7. Current Policy Framework**

WRC’s recruitment framework is designed to be fair, robust and evidence-based, with multiple safeguards in place to ensure equitable outcomes and merit-based appointments. Key elements of the recruitment process include:

- A requirement that all vacancies are reviewed prior to recruitment to confirm ongoing organisational need, role scope, and capability requirements. Where roles are materially changed, they may be assessed through WRC’s Job Evaluation Committee to ensure appropriate sizing, internal equity, and alignment with the external labour market.
- Competency-based recruitment and selection practices, including the use of role-specific and values-based interview questions drawn from established interview question banks, supporting consistency and comparability across candidates.
- Panel-based interviews, typically comprising the hiring manager and relevant technical expertise, with P&C involvement for senior or complex appointments and Tai-ranga-whenua involvement for senior positions and or positions with specific responsibilities aligned to iwi relationships.
- Merit-based decision-making supported by documented assessment against defined selection criteria, rather than subjective preference.
- Mandatory reference checking for preferred candidates, undertaken prior to any formal offer being made.
- The ability to incorporate additional assessment tools, such as psychometric or ability testing, where appropriate to the role, to support balanced and well-informed appointment decisions.

- Clear approval points, documentation requirements and compliance with employment, privacy, and human rights legislation.

Together, these elements provide assurance that WRC's recruitment processes are comprehensive, transparent, and consistently applied. While ongoing improvement work is focused on enhancing manager capability, candidate experience and system usability, the underlying framework provides confidence that recruitment decisions are fair, equitable and focused on appointing the person best suited to the role.

## 8. Current Operational Process

The 'Recruitment process for Managers' describes an end-to-end workflow encompassing:

- confirming vacancy and approvals
- advertising (internal/external)
- shortlisting, interviewing, reference checking
- offer development and pre-employment checks
- onboarding and pre-boarding tasks.

## 9. Organisational Context

Recruitment at WRC operates within the broader workforce and organisational context set by He Manawa Tangata 2025–2029 (the People Strategy). A key focus of the strategy is ensuring the organisation is future ready, including having the capability, capacity and leadership required to respond to changing community expectations, technological change, and increasing workforce competition. Effective recruitment is a critical enabler of this, supporting WRC to attract and retain people with the skills, experience and values required to deliver for the Waikato region.

The People Strategy also identifies advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) as a priority initiative. Recruitment plays a central role in achieving this objective by ensuring processes are fair, transparent and accessible, and that WRC presents itself as an employer of choice to a diverse range of candidates. This approach does not replace merit-based selection; rather, it strengthens how WRC attracts talent, supports managers to assess capability consistently, and ensures appointment decisions are based on role requirements, organisational values, and long-term workforce sustainability.

Recruitment is also undertaken in the context of He Whare Taumatua – WRC's Māori Employment Strategy. Consistent with challenges experienced across the local government sector, WRC has faced difficulty attracting Māori applicants into some roles, particularly technical and specialist positions. These challenges reflect broader labour market dynamics and competition for Māori capability rather than recruitment process issues alone. Through He Whare Taumatua, WRC is continuing to strengthen its position as an employer of choice for Māori by improving how roles are framed, how WRC presents itself as an employer, and how managers are supported to recruit in culturally responsive and inclusive ways. These initiatives sit alongside WRC's broader employee value proposition, including employment conditions and wellbeing initiatives that support attraction and retention for all kaimahi.

The current recruitment environment is characterised by a highly competitive labour market, particularly for specialist and senior technical roles such as Manager Infrastructure and Chief Engineer. It is of great importance that we get the right person for these senior roles and these roles can attract a limited candidate pool, with strong competition from other councils and the private sector. This market context impacts recruitment timeframes and

appointment outcomes and reinforces the importance of having clear processes, capable hiring managers, and a compelling employment offer.

Within this context, WRC operates a devolved recruitment model supported by People & Capability. While this model promotes manager ownership and accountability, it also places high demands on manager capability and the supporting systems and tools. Recognising this, WRC has a programme of recruitment improvement underway aimed at strengthening manager confidence and capability, improving candidate experience, optimising system use, and reducing administrative burden. This work is aligned with the People Strategy and supports WRC's continued focus on recruitment excellence, workforce sustainability, and being an employer of choice in a competitive labour market.

## ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

### 10. Improvement Initiatives Underway

The following initiatives are currently in progress or being scoped:

*a. Recruitment Process Review (aligned to Infor Consolidation Project)*

Focused on identifying:

- opportunities to streamline and optimise the system and related processes
- improvements to manager usability
- areas to strengthen candidate experience
- requirements for updated system guidance and training.

*b. Management Essentials: Recruitment*

Development of a structured learning module to improve manager competence in:

- job design and advertising
- shortlisting and interviewing
- selection decision-making
- equitable and inclusive practice.

Aligned with People Strategy initiatives around confident managers and capability uplift.

*c. Updated Recruitment Guidance*

- Comprehensive, step-by-step material to support managers using Global HR
- Support materials and templates to support non-system related process steps.

*d. Candidate Insights and Experience Measures*

- Development of an applicant experience measure (aligned to the Employee Experience Measures initiative). The upcoming Employee Experience Measures Request for Proposal (RFP) and the resultant new system for measurement will enable the development of an applicant experience measure, providing data to support evidence-based improvement (People Strategy KPI)
- Additionally, P&C will be surveying recent applicants as part of the recruitment review.

## WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

11. WRC has a clear and well-established recruitment policy framework that supports fair, merit-based, and transparent appointment decisions. Recruitment practice is manager-led and operates within a devolved model, providing flexibility and ownership while relying on capable managers, effective systems, and clear guidance to deliver consistent outcomes.
12. Current recruitment practice is influenced by system limitations, varying levels of manager capability, and a highly competitive labour market, particularly for specialist and senior technical roles where candidate supply is constrained. These challenges are not unique to WRC and are common across the local government sector. They reinforce the importance of continuously strengthening recruitment capability, process efficiency, and the organisation's overall employment offer.
13. Recruitment is a critical lever in delivering WRC's People Strategy *He Manawa Tangata 2025–2029*, including its focus on future readiness and advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. In this context, recruitment also aligns with *He Whare Taumatua* – the Māori Employment Strategy – which supports WRC's ambition to strengthen its position as an employer of choice for Māori. Ongoing initiatives aim to improve how WRC presents itself as an employer, supports managers to recruit in inclusive and culturally responsive ways, and enhances attraction and retention outcomes for all kaimahi.
14. A structured programme of recruitment improvement is underway and aligned with the Infor Consolidation Project and wider workforce initiatives. This programme focuses on optimising recruitment processes, strengthening manager capability, improving candidate experience, and reducing administrative burden. This work is progressing at pace and delivering improvements as it progresses. WRC remains well positioned to attract and retain capability in a changing and competitive labour market.

## ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **WRC Recruitment Policy (Doc # 21556585)** [↓](#)
2. **WRC Recruitment Process for Managers (Doc # 14285484)** [↓](#)
3. **He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy 2025-2029 (Doc #33829774)** [↓](#)
4. **Te Whare Tuamatua | Our Māori Employment Strategy (Doc# 29538716)** [↓](#)

**PEOPLE**

POSITIVE, ENGAGED AND CAPABLE PEOPLE

## Recruitment Policy & Procedures

### 1. Purpose

Waikato Regional Council (Council) is committed to fairly and equitably recruiting and selecting people with the competencies, skills, and qualifications necessary to carry out their roles effectively, efficiently, and in keeping with the Council's strategic requirements, values, and core competencies.

### 2. Scope

The recruitment policy applies to the appointment of permanent, fixed term, and casual employees of more than 3 months to all positions in Council, with the exception of the Chief Executive.

### 3. Policy and Principles

This policy and procedures document outlines the requirements to be followed by those responsible for recruitment to vacant positions to ensure recruitment and selection decisions are fair, robust and support the Council in achieving its vision and goals.

It is critical that Council, through its advertising and sourcing strategies, attracts a sufficiently sized pool of potential candidates with a range of backgrounds and relevant skills, experience and qualifications, and, through its selection process, follows an equitable, fair and robust process to ensure the appointment of the best candidate for the position.

The underlying principles are:

- 3.1 Processes will be open, consistent, and objective, with selection based on relevant and specific selection criteria, and responsive to the employment requirements and preferences of our wider Waikato workforce.
- 3.2 Selection decisions will be merit-based and will not discriminate, ensuring the person best suited to the job is appointed to the position.
- 3.3 Council employees will be encouraged to apply and be considered for positions within the organisation, thus supporting retention and career development strategies.
- 3.4 Council values inclusion and people from diverse backgrounds.
- 3.5 Council will uphold He Whare Taumatua and its aims throughout the recruitment process.
- 3.6 The privacy of all people who express interest in a vacancy will be protected.

### 4. EEO, Diversity and Legislation

This policy and guidelines comply with relevant legislation including the Human Rights Act 1993, the Privacy Act 2020, Immigration Act 2009, Immigration Amendment Act (No 2) 2015, the Employment Relations Act 2000 and our obligations under the Local Government Act 2002.

---

Doc #18128493(Word), 21556585 (PDF)    Adopted: Aug 2018    Effective: Feb 2024    Review: Feb 2026

Owner: Executive Manager People & Capability    Approver: ELT    Version: 2    Page 1

### **He Whare Taumatua | Our Māori Employment Strategy**

The council approved He Whare Taumatua | Our Māori Employment Strategy in April 2024. He Whare Taumatua is a key vehicle through which the council can achieve our good employer obligations arising from the Local Government Act to kaimahi Māori, and ensure that our employment processes are equitable for Māori.

He Pou Tokomanawa | Recruitment, retention and development is one of the four strategic pou within He Whare Taumatua, and the Recruitment Policy and Procedures have been reviewed to deliver on the implementation plan for the strategy.

## **5. Responsibilities**

All those undertaking roles as part of this policy are responsible for upholding He Whare Taumatua, including ensuring the processes set out in this policy are followed.

### **Hiring Managers:**

- 5.1 Hiring managers are responsible for ensuring all vacancies have sufficient budget and that permanent roles are established within the applicable annual plan.
- 5.2 Hiring Managers are responsible for recruitment to vacant positions within their areas of responsibility and in accordance with this policy.

### **Section Managers:**

- 5.3 Section Manager approval is required before job vacancies can be advertised for recruitment.
- 5.4 Section Manager approval is required to proceed to offer for preferred candidates within 85% to 115% of Band.

### **Executive Manager People & Capability:**

- 5.5 The Executive Manager - People & Capability is responsible for ensuring line managers are trained and equipped with the necessary tools to complete the recruitment and selection process.
- 5.6 The Executive Manager - People & Capability is responsible for ensuring ELT are provided with trend data and regular reports identifying all offers made at 97% of Band or above, which roles, and the approving Manager for these offers.

## **6. Recruitment and Selection**

### **Advertising**

- 6.1 Permanent vacancies will generally be advertised to Council staff internally via electronic notification with hard copies of relevant jobs also posted on noticeboards where electronic notification is not available.
- 6.2 Vacancies will generally also be advertised externally on the Waikato Regional Council website and Seek (or similar electronic website), and a kaupapa Māori recruitment platform.
- 6.3 From time to time, the line manager may decide to use only the Waikato Regional Council website or decide to advertise more widely. Use of print media is generally discouraged due to high costs, however, can be used where there is a genuine need to do so.
- 6.4 The text for the advertisement will be developed by the line manager using templates designed to support consistent messaging about working at Council, including messaging connected to the aims of He Whare Taumatua. The HR Business Partner / Advisor and People & Capability Coordinators may provide advice on this, supported by Tai-ranga-whenua as required.

---

Doc #18128493(Word), 21556585 (PDF) Adopted: Aug 2018 Effective: Feb 2024 Review: Feb 2026  
Owner: Executive Manager People & Capability Approver: ELT Version: 2 Page 2

6.5 In some circumstances it may be appropriate to waive the general requirement to advertise. For example where an individual has been seconded to a vacant role that had previously been openly advertised or where the role is part of an internal career pathway. No further advertising may be required if the role was advertised unsuccessfully within the last 3 months. Any such waiver requires sign off or approval from the HR Business Partners / Advisor and should have regard to the aims of He Whare Taumatua.

### **Interviews**

- 6.6 Generally, interviews will be conducted by a panel comprising the line manager, a technical expert, and possibly a third person that may be an HR Business Partner / Advisor.
- 6.7 For senior (second tier) roles, the Executive Manager - People and Capability will represent Human Resources. The Chief Executive will determine how best to provide for Māori leadership representation on the panel, including consideration of external tangata whenua panel members.
- 6.8 For people leader roles at tier three and below, Tai-ranga-whenua may be invited to provide representation on the panel through the Pou Tūhono. The Pou Tūhono will consider the strategic alignment to the vision, goals and performance targets of He Whare Taumatua in providing for Māori representation on the panel, and the subject matter relevance of the role being advertised, in determining whether to take up an opportunity to join any given panel.
- 6.9 Interview questions will be generated by the line manager using templates based on WRC values and the competencies / behaviours required for the role. HR Business Partners / Advisor and People & Capability Coordinators may provide advice on this. Required questions relating to Te Tiriti o Waitangi are provided as part of this template, alongside optional questions relating to partnership with tangata whenua and working within te ao Māori.

### **Disclosure**

6.10 If any member of the panel has a personal relationship with any of the candidates for interview, this must be declared to the hiring manager or HR Business Partner / Advisor. In general, such conflicts of interest will require the panel member to withdraw from the interview and decision-making process.

### **Recruitment Consultants**

6.11 Recruitment consultancies should only be utilised after all other recruitment options have been exhausted. The choice of consultant will be agreed on by the HR Business Partner / Advisor and will be responsible for the initial contact. Consultants must receive relevant organisational information and use this to ensure a good cultural fit. They must apply principles of EEO, and any other conditions Council wishes to impose to ensure a fair and equitable recruitment process is undertaken. These conditions will be communicated by the HR Business Partner / Advisor aligned to the area recruiting. In all cases the consultant must be both competent and cost effective. Costs for recruitment consultants are to be paid from the directorate budgets. The recruiter will consider the use of Māori recruitment consultancies, or consultancies with clear Māori networks, alongside other recruitment consultancies, should the use of external recruitment consultants be agreed.

### **Job/Role Descriptions**

6.12 Hiring managers will review and update the job/role description prior to recruitment commencing. Guidance is available for hiring managers through Tai-ranga-whenua as to the

---

Doc #18128493(Word), 21556585 (PDF) Adopted: Aug 2018 Effective: Feb 2024 Review: Feb 2026  
Owner: Executive Manager People & Capability Approver: ELT Version: 2 Page 3

appropriate pūkenga Māori, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi qualifications, skills and experiences suitable for any given role.

- 6.13 Job/role descriptions will include the purpose of the role, the responsibilities of the role to the Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations for council, an overview of key tasks and responsibilities, organisational and role specific competencies, expected outputs and outcomes and Council values.

### Reference Checks

- 6.14 Reference checks must be carried out by the hiring manager for any preferred candidate before making an offer of employment. Reference check questions will be developed by the hiring manager using the template. The HR Business Partners / Advisor and People & Capability Coordinators may provide advice on this and will provide coaching as required.
- 6.15 A minimum of two reference checks must be completed, one of these should include the candidate's previous employer and preferably would include the candidate's previous line manager. In some circumstances, the HR Business Partner / Advisor may waive the requirement for reference checks for internal candidates.
- 6.16 Where the role will have a high level of engagement with tangata whenua, or significant responsibilities to Māori, an additional reference from a tangata whenua or Māori entity the candidate has previously worked with may be encouraged.
- 6.17 Reference checks will only be carried out with referees provided by the candidate and only with the candidate's written permission (email/electronic permission is acceptable). All data gained from reference checks is considered confidential evaluative material and will not be divulged to the candidate, unless express permission is given by the referee.

### Testing, Feedback & Evaluative Material

- 6.18 Psychometric and/or ability testing may be required as part of the recruitment process. Such tests will be carried out by People and Capability or their nominated agent. Feedback on the results will be given to the line manager. A candidates' results may be provided to that candidate if requested, where the results include a personality profile or similar feedback may need to come from a qualified person and may not be provided in written form.
- 6.19 Notes taken during the interview process are considered evaluative material and will not be divulged to the candidate.

## 7. Redeployment

- 7.1 Council encourages organisational re-deployment as the preferred option for employees whose jobs have been affected in a review/restructure.
- 7.2 People and Capability will work with impacted staff and line managers to assess possible opportunities for redeployment and where suitable vacancies do exist, employees at risk of redundancy will typically be appointed in preference to other internal or external candidates.

## 8. Rehire of Former Employees

- 8.1 Whether for contract work or for permanent or temporary employment with Council, line managers must ascertain whether applicants/contractors have been employed by Council in the past and if so, why that employment relationship ended. Where necessary, People and Capability records may be checked to validate reasons provided.

---

Doc #18128493(Word), 21556585 (PDF) Adopted: Aug 2018 Effective: Feb 2024 Review: Feb 2026  
Owner: Executive Manager People & Capability Approver: ELT Version: 2 Page 4

- 8.2 If an applicant was employed by Council in the previous twelve months and they left their position because it was a fixed term or temporary position or they voluntarily resigned, then after the checks as noted above, they may be employed again within twelve months as an employee subject to normal recruitment criteria.
- 8.3 Employees that have voluntarily resigned from Council may not be employed as private contractors / consultants for a period of at least six months from the date of termination. This period may be waived at the discretion of the Chief Executive.
- 8.4 If the potential employee/contractor was a former employee and left Council within the last twelve months and received redundancy or some form of ex-gratia compensation, then they may not be employed or appointed in any capacity (employee or contractor) for a period of at least twelve months following their final day at work. This period may be waived at the discretion of the Chief Executive.
- 8.5 A former employee who has received a redundancy payment may be offered a position (subject to normal recruitment criteria) within 12 months of leaving WRC if they reimburse Council the redundancy payment they received, pro-rated up to a timeframe of 12 months, or with written approval from the Chief Executive.

## 9. Review

The Executive Manager - People and Capability will provide ongoing review of the implementation of this policy and its adherence to the principles outlined.

## 10. References

[Relocation Guidelines \(Doc# 25799212\)](#)

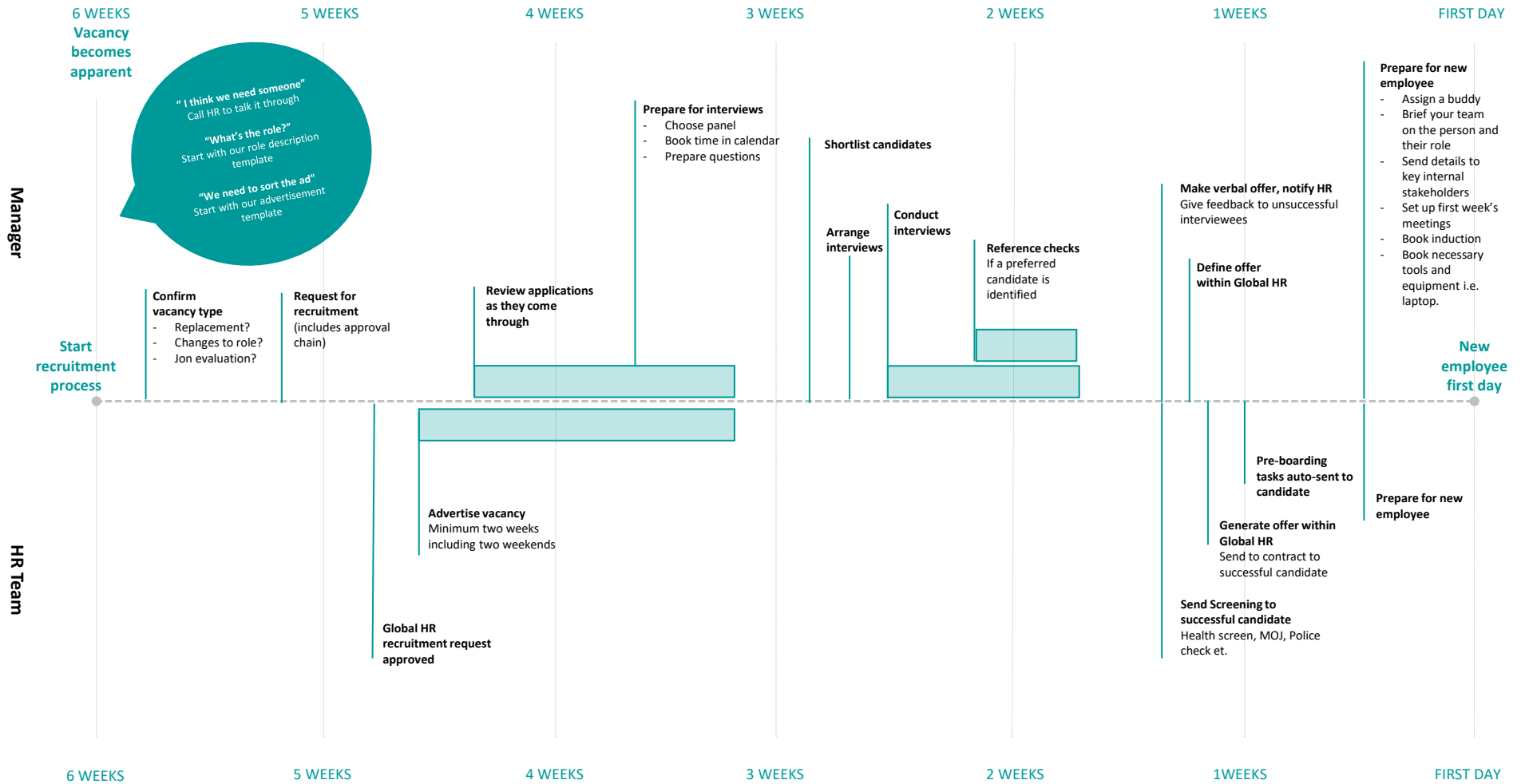
[Recruitment Cheat Sheet \(Doc# 25418314\)](#)

[He Whare Taumatua \(Doc# 29538716\)](#)

---

Doc #18128493(Word), 21556585 (PDF) Adopted: Aug 2018 Effective: Feb 2024 Review: Feb 2026

Owner: Executive Manager People & Capability Approver: ELT Version: 2 Page 5



He Manawa Tangata  
**Our People Strategy**  
**2025-2029**



**He taiao mauriora**  
**Healthy environment**

**He hapori hihiri**  
**Vibrant communities**

**He ōhanga pakari**  
**Strong economy**

Toitū te whenua, toitū te taiao, toitū te tangata, ngā taonga tuku iho nō tuawhakarere. Tīhei mauri ora!

He hōnore, he korōria ki te Atua, te tīmatanga me te whakamutunga o ngā mea katoa.

E koro mā, e kuī mā, koutou kua haohia e te kūpenga o Taramainuku i te tau ka mahue ake nei – e tangihia tonuhia nei e te ngākau, haere koutou. Haere ki te Pūtahi nui o Rehua, haere ki te Poutūtanga o Pipiri, haere ki te Kāpunipunitanga o Wairua, okioki atu ai.

Kāti, ka miha tikatia te arikinui Kuini Nga wai hono i te po e noho mai nei i te ahurewa tapu o ōna tūpuna, tatū atu rā ki te Whare o Pootatau. Paimārire ki a rātou.

E rere te hau maiangi o mihi ki ngā ringa tōhau nui o te Kaunihera ā-Rohe o Waikato – mōu i heke werawera ki te whakatutuki i ngā mahi kei mua i te aroaro. Tēnā koutou katoa.

Ko tēnei rautaki ko te panapana o te manawa tangata e mauri ora atu ai ngā wāhanga e rima, arā: kia whāia nuitia e te tini; kia angitū ngā kaimahi; kia kounga ngā hua; ko te haumarū, te hauora, me te oranga; ko te whakarite hoki mō āpōpō.

Hei kupu whakamutunga, whāia te pae tawhiti kia tata, whakamaua te pae tata kia tina.

Haumi ē! Hui ē! Tāiki ē!

If the land is secure, if the environment is protected, if the people are sustained — they remain as treasured inheritances from ancient times. The breath of life!

All honour and glory to God, the beginning and the end of all things.

To the elders, men and women, who have been taken by the net of Taramainuku in the current year who continue to be deeply mourned, go now. Go to the great gathering place of Rehua, to the spiritual intersection of Pipiri, to the collective resting place of spirits — rest in peace.

We also acknowledge and honour the Māori Queen, te arikinui Kuini Nga wai hono i te po, who now sits upon the sacred throne of her ancestors, we also acknowledge the House of Pootatau. Peace and blessings to them all.

Let the gentle rising wind of gratitude flow to the many steadfast hands of Waikato Regional Council – for the tremendous effort you have put in to undertake your work. Greetings and thanks to you all.

This, our strategy, is the heartbeat that energises each of our five focus areas: to be sought after; to support staff to be successful; to lift the quality of our outcomes; to prioritise health, safety, and wellbeing; and to be ready for the future.

As a final word, pursue the distant horizon until it is close; hold fast to what is already within reach.

Bind it! Join it! It is done!

# Ngā ihirangi

## Contents

- 1** Te matawhānui, aronga me ngā uara  
**Our vision, purpose and values**
- 2** He tīmatanga kōrero  
**Introduction**
- 2** Context
- 3** Background
- 5** Ngā wāhanga aronga nui me ngā kaupapa matua  
**Strategic focus areas and priority initiatives**
- 7** Kaimahi lifecycle model
- 8** E whakatutuki ai i tēnei rautaki  
**Delivering on this strategy**
- 8** Roles and responsibilities
- 9** Plan at a glance
- 10** Appendix A: Good Employer Obligations (Local Government Act 2002)



# Te matawhānui, aronga me ngā uara

## Our vision, purpose and values

This strategy acknowledges the importance of individual success and recognises the need for us to perform as a collective team.

There is a focus on continuing to embed a positive and collaborative one team culture whereby every person in every location is united by our vision, purpose and values: *Huinga tangata oranga Waikato* - One team for a better Waikato.

**Being an employer of choice:** We want the best people to work for us — individuals who are talented, purpose driven and aligned with our values. Our people are not just kaimahi: they are ambassadors of WRC, supporting one another and the communities we serve.

**Setting people up for success:** We want our people to be confident, capable and highly engaged in their roles.

**Investing in a culture of performance:** We are committed to cultivating a high-performing, values-driven culture where people are empowered, supported and recognised for their contributions.

**Prioritising health, safety and wellbeing:** We want our people to know their health, safety and wellbeing is of paramount importance to us, and to have confidence we are providing them with a safe and healthy workplace.

**Being future ready:** We want our organisation and our people to be well prepared for future challenges and opportunities.

### Matawhānui

#### Our vision

Waikato mārohirohi: Manaaki whenua, whakamana tangata.

The mighty Waikato: Caring for our place, empowering our people.

### Tā mātou aronga matua

#### Our purpose

Working together for a Waikato region that has a healthy environment, vibrant communities and strong economy.

### Ngā uara

#### Our values

Our values define how we work as individuals and together as an organisation to achieve our vision, purpose and commitment to the people in the Waikato region today and for generations to come.



See our strategic direction:  
[waikatoregion.govt.nz/strategy](https://waikatoregion.govt.nz/strategy)

# He tīmatanga kōrero

## Introduction

*He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy* provides a forward-looking cohesive framework to enhance the experience of every Waikato Regional Council kaimahi (employee) and those who are yet to join us.

### Context

Our people carry out a wide range of responsibilities that directly impact the quality of life for our residents and the sustainability of the local environment within our rohe. They play a vital role in fostering community wellbeing, ensuring effective service delivery, and maintaining transparency and accountability in local governance.

While many of our kaimahi are based in Hamilton, 15 per cent work from offices and depots spread throughout the rohe. We operate within a complex and constantly evolving political landscape, facing ever-increasing expectations from iwi Māori, stakeholders and customers.

The technological landscape is constantly evolving, and it is essential that our people are supported to build and grow the capability to leverage these technological developments for increased productivity and innovation.

To thrive in this environment, it is essential that we support our kaimahi effectively.

At the same time, Aotearoa New Zealand's workforce is becoming more demographically diverse, requiring us to respect, adapt and bridge different aspirations, expectations of work and communication styles. This diversity presents both challenges and opportunities as we work to ensure that our organisation is an employer of choice, fosters a culture of performance and sets people up for success.



Planning for increased complexity and evolving external drivers that will shape our workforce — while remaining adaptable to unforeseen changes — is at the heart of *He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy*. This strategy also serves as a critical mitigation tool for two key strategic risks:

- STRAT 04: People, Capability, Capacity, and Culture – If WRC does not foster a constructive organisational culture, it risks poor staff attraction, retention, engagement and performance, ultimately affecting its ability to deliver on strategic priorities and goals.
- STRAT 05: Health and Safety – There is a risk of harm if WRC does not provide a safe and healthy work environment for workers, visitors and those affected by our operations.

By aligning with legislative obligations under the *Health and Safety at Work Act (2015)*, the *Employment Relations Act (2000)*, and the *Local Government Act (2002)*<sup>1</sup>, the people strategy ensures that WRC continues to support its people while delivering on its broader commitments.

## Background

At WRC, previous people strategies focused on leadership development, talent attraction, workforce planning, health and safety improvements, and responding to external challenges, including COVID-19.

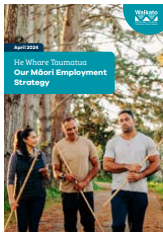
The most recent people strategy (2021-2025) prioritised culture, care and change, aiming to foster a constructive workplace culture that empowers employees, enhances capability and prepares for future workforce needs through strategic workforce planning and the use of technology. Key achievements included comprehensive leadership development initiatives, strengthened health, safety, and wellbeing frameworks, and improved workforce planning efforts.

Leadership programmes and onboarding enhancements have strengthened our organisational culture, while advancements in health and safety systems and wellbeing initiatives have created a safer, more supportive work environment. Workforce planning initiatives, including enhanced people metrics, ongoing graduate and student programmes, career pathways work, and the development of *He Whare Taumatua | Our Māori Employment Strategy*, have helped build an agile, future-ready workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

These achievements provide a strong foundation for *He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy 2025-2029*.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002





A key advancement in fostering an inclusive and future-ready workforce is **He Whare Taumatua | Our Māori Employment Strategy** approved by the Executive Leadership Team in 2024. This strategy strengthens WRC’s ability to attract, retain and develop Māori talent, ensuring meaningful representation at all levels of the organisation. Its goals directly support the focus areas of being an employer of choice, setting people up for success, and investing in a culture of performance by ensuring Māori expertise is recognised and workplace culture is culturally responsive.



Additionally, WRC’s commitment to health and safety is reinforced through the **Health and Safety Strategic Plan (2025-2029)**, which focuses on enabling a healthy and effective workforce. By equipping kaimahi with essential health and safety expertise, fostering a proactive culture, and ensuring workplace wellbeing, WRC continues to create safe and supportive environments for all.

*He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy 2025-2029* has been developed through extensive consultation, incorporating feedback from kaimahi workshops, previous strategic initiatives, workforce surveys and insights from senior leadership. As WRC navigates an evolving political, economic, technological and social landscape, this strategy serves as a roadmap for sustaining an engaged, capable and resilient workforce. It will ensure that WRC continues to deliver on its commitments while fostering a safe, inclusive and high-performing work environment.

Waikato Regional Council has developed and implemented people strategies for over a decade to strengthen organisational performance and employee wellbeing. These strategies aim to attract, develop, engage, and retain a talented workforce aligned with WRC’s vision, purpose, and values. *He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy 2025-2029* builds on this foundation, ensuring WRC remains an employer of choice, sets people up for success, invests in a culture of performance, prioritises health and safety and is future ready.



# Ngā wāhanga aronga nui me ngā kaupapa matua

## Strategic focus areas and priority initiatives

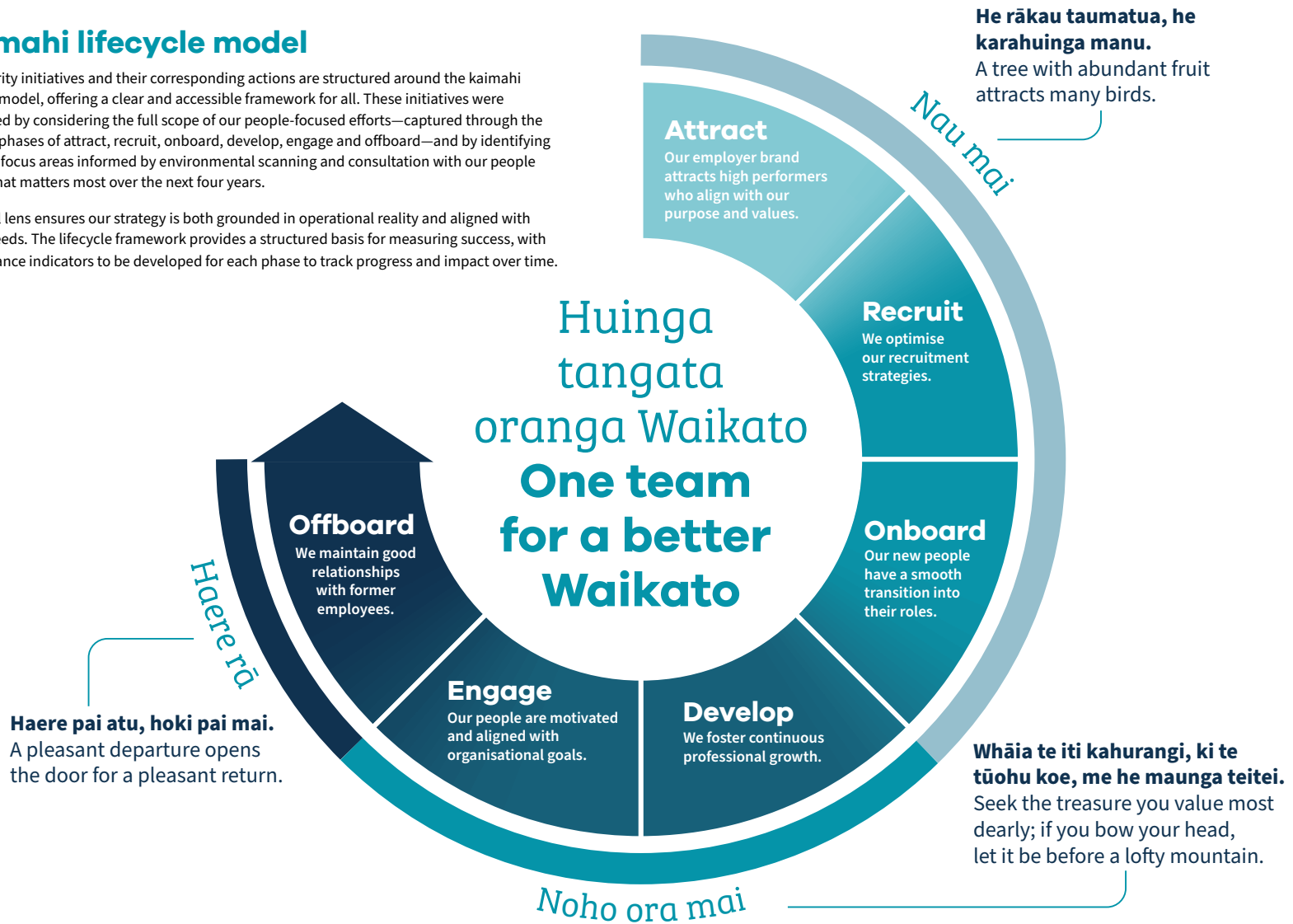
Strategic focus areas	Priority initiatives and goals	Actions
<p><b>1. E whāia nuitia ai e te tini tangata</b>  <b>Being an employer of choice</b></p> <p>We want the best people to work for us — individuals who are talented, purpose driven and aligned with our values. Our people are not just kaimahi: they are ambassadors of WRC supporting one another and the communities we serve.</p>	<p><b>Recruitment excellence</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Attract top talent through inclusive, strategic and values-aligned recruitment.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Culture of advocacy</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Create a workplace where people feel valued, heard and connected to purpose.</p>	<p><b>Enhance recruitment experience:</b> streamline recruitment processes to ensure consistency, quality, and a positive candidate journey.</p> <p><b>Embed our employee value proposition (EVP):</b> integrate WRC’s EVP and brand messaging across all recruitment touchpoints.</p> <p><b>Targeted talent attraction:</b> launch tailored campaigns to attract Māori talent and fill hard-to-recruit specialist roles.</p> <p><b>Build strategic pipelines:</b> strengthen partnerships with agencies, tertiary institutions, and training providers to secure future talent.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Offer meaningful benefits:</b> regularly review and evolve our benefits to ensure they are inclusive, competitive, affordable and aligned with employee needs.</p> <p><b>Clarify role impact:</b> implement a programme to help employees understand how their work contributes to WRC’s mission.</p> <p><b>Improve exit feedback:</b> enhance exit interview processes to gather actionable insights and inform retention strategies.</p> <p><b>Preserve critical knowledge:</b> establish a structured approach to knowledge transfer, ensuring continuity and reducing risk when employees leave.</p>
<p><b>2. E angitū ai te hunga kaimahi</b>  <b>Setting people up for success</b></p> <p>We want our people to be confident, capable and highly engaged in their roles.</p>	<p><b>Capability through learning</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Build confidence and capability through tailored learning, onboarding and development.</p>	<p><b>Deliver robust onboarding:</b> launch a comprehensive, role-specific onboarding experience that supports success from day one.</p> <p><b>Develop a learning strategy:</b> create a learning and development framework that builds capability across all levels and functions.</p> <p><b>Support confident managers:</b> provide ongoing training and tools to help managers effectively lead, coach and manage performance.</p> <p><b>Integrate He Whare Taumatua:</b> embed <i>He Whare Taumatua</i>   <i>Our Māori Employment Strategy</i> actions into learning and development programmes.</p>

Strategic focus areas	Priority initiatives and goals	Actions
<p><b>3. E piki ai ki taumata kē atu</b>  <b>Investing in a culture of performance</b></p> <p>We are committed to cultivating a high-performing, values-driven culture where people are empowered, supported and recognised for their contributions.</p>	<p><b>Evolve our culture programme</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Foster a culture of recognition, leadership and continuous improvement.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Strengthen performance foundations</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Enable high performance through the use of smart systems, data and continuous feedback.</p>	<p><b>Refresh our culture programme:</b> reinvigorate <i>Kia eke ki tōna taumata   Be Our Best</i>, including leadership development and culture metrics.</p> <p><b>Celebrate success:</b> promote a culture of recognition through non-financial rewards and celebrations of individual and team achievements.</p> <p><b>Track what matters:</b> strengthen the use of culture, engagement and leadership data to guide decisions and measure progress.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Drive continuous improvement:</b> regularly refine policies, systems and processes to support high performance.</p> <p><b>Leverage data and tech:</b> use technology and HR analytics to improve productivity and inform strategic workforce decisions.</p> <p><b>Enable performance growth:</b> enhance performance management practices by enabling managers to proactively and constructively address development and performance gaps.</p> <p><b>Plan for succession:</b> support managers in developing succession plans aligned with workforce needs and future capability.</p>
<p><b>4. E kaingākauria ai te haumarū, te hauora me te oranga</b>  <b>Prioritising health, safety and wellbeing</b></p> <p>We want our people to know their health, safety and wellbeing is of paramount importance to us, and to have confidence we are providing them with a safe and healthy workplace.</p>	<p><b>Shape workplace health and safety to harness the full potential of our people</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Embed wellbeing, safety leadership, and innovation into everyday practice.</p>	<p><b>Set strategic direction:</b> update and embed <i>the Health and Safety Strategy 2025–2029</i> to guide long-term priorities.</p> <p><b>Invest in wellbeing:</b> continue to support initiatives that promote physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p><b>Lead in safety:</b> drive meaningful change with strong leadership, data-driven insights, and structured programmes, tailored to the evolving world of work.</p> <p><b>Recognise and innovate:</b> strengthen health and safety practices, while recognising and celebrating excellence and innovation.</p>
<p><b>5. E aro ai ki te āpōpō</b>  <b>Being future ready</b></p> <p>We want our organisation and our people to be well prepared for future challenges and opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Lead through change and transformation</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Equip people to navigate change with confidence and resilience.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Build a future-focused workforce</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Prepare for tomorrow through succession, knowledge sharing and early talent development.</p>	<p><b>Support change leadership:</b> roll out the navigating change programme and provide ongoing support for managers leading through uncertainty.</p> <p><b>Advance diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB):</b> develop and implement a strategy that reflects future workforce demographics and fosters inclusion and belonging.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Plan strategically:</b> guide managers in aligning succession planning with workforce strategy.</p> <p><b>Boost tech capability:</b> ensure employees are equipped to use emerging technologies to work smarter and more effectively.</p> <p><b>Grow talent early:</b> expand graduate programmes and student engagement programmes to build a strong pipeline of future talent.</p>

### Kaimahi lifecycle model

The priority initiatives and their corresponding actions are structured around the kaimahi lifecycle model, offering a clear and accessible framework for all. These initiatives were developed by considering the full scope of our people-focused efforts—captured through the lifecycle phases of attract, recruit, onboard, develop, engage and offboard—and by identifying strategic focus areas informed by environmental scanning and consultation with our people about what matters most over the next four years.

This dual lens ensures our strategy is both grounded in operational reality and aligned with future needs. The lifecycle framework provides a structured basis for measuring success, with performance indicators to be developed for each phase to track progress and impact over time.



# E whakatutuki ai i tēnei rautaki Delivering on this strategy

We all have a part to play in the success of *He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy*. By working together, we can make sure Waikato Regional Council is an excellent place to work, now and into the future.

## Roles and responsibilities

The key responsibilities are:

- **Shared ownership:** everyone has a role to play in bringing *He Manawa Tangata | Our People Strategy* to life.
- **Progressive accountability:** responsibilities increase with leadership scope — from engagement to enablement to strategic leadership.
- **People and Capability as enabler:** supports and partners with the organisation but does not solely own or deliver the strategy.

### Executive Leadership Team

- Leads, sponsors and champions the people strategy across the organisation.
- Ensures alignment with broader WRC strategies and priorities.
- Advocates for and allocates resources to enable successful implementation.
- Provides strategic direction and adjusts priorities as needed to respond to change.

### People and Capability

- Partners with leaders and teams to co-design and operationalise people strategy initiatives.
- Provides data-driven insights to inform decision-making and measure progress.
- Delivers learning, development, and organisational capability solutions.
- Continuously improves systems, policies, and practices to support strategic goals.
- Provides core services that enable and sustain people-focused outcomes.

### People leaders

- Role models and champions the people strategy in daily leadership practice.
- Translates strategy into meaningful actions for the teams.
- Supports cross-functional collaboration to deliver on shared people priorities.
- Fosters a culture of inclusion, learning and performance, aligned with the strategy.

### Kaimahi

- Actively engages with and participates in people strategy initiatives.
- Provides feedback, ideas, and lived experience to shape continuous improvement.
- Embraces learning and development opportunities as part of a growth mindset.



## Plan at a glance

Table legend

Now priority

Next priority

Continuous improvement

### Nau mai

He rākau taumatua, he karahuinga manu.  
A tree with abundant fruit attracts many birds.

### Noho ora mai

Whāia te iti kahurangi, ki te tūohu koe, me he maunga teitei.  
Pursue excellence, and if you should stumble, let it be to a lofty mountain.

### Haere rā

Haere pai atu, hoki pai mai  
A pleasant departure opens the door for a pleasant return.

	Attract	Recruit	Onboard	Develop	Engage	Offboard
<b>Strategic focus areas</b>	Our employer brand attracts high performers who align with our purpose and values	We optimise our recruitment strategies	Our new people have a smooth transition into their roles	We foster continuous professional growth	Our people are motivated and aligned with organisational goals	We maintain good relationships with former employees
<b>1 Being an employer of choice</b>	<b>Recruitment excellence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted talent attraction</li> <li>Build strategic pipelines</li> </ul>	<b>Recruitment excellence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance recruitment experience</li> <li>Embed our EVP</li> </ul>	<b>Culture of advocacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify role impact</li> </ul>		<b>Culture of advocacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer meaningful benefits</li> </ul>	<b>Culture of advocacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve exit feedback</li> <li>Preserve critical knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>2 Setting people up for success</b>			<b>Capability through learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver robust onboarding</li> </ul>	<b>Capability through learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a learning strategy</li> <li>Support confident managers</li> <li>Integrate He Whare Taumatua   Our Māori Employment Strategy</li> </ul>		
<b>3 Investing in a culture of performance</b>				<b>Strengthen performance foundations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable performance growth</li> </ul>	<b>Evolve our culture programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh our culture programme</li> <li>Celebrate success</li> <li>Track what matters</li> <li>Drive continuous improvement</li> </ul> <b>Strengthen performance foundations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage data and tech</li> </ul>	<b>Strengthen performance foundations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for succession</li> </ul>
<b>4 Prioritising health, safety and wellbeing</b>	<b>Shape workplace health and safety to harness the full potential of our people</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set strategic direction in health, safety and wellbeing</li> </ul>			<b>Shape workplace health and safety to harness the full potential of our people</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in wellbeing</li> <li>Lead in safety</li> <li>Health and safety - recognise and innovate</li> </ul>		
<b>5 Being future ready</b>	<b>Build a future-focused workforce</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow talent early</li> </ul>			<b>Lead through change and transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support change leadership</li> </ul> <b>Build a future-focused workforce</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan strategically</li> <li>Boost tech capability</li> </ul>	<b>Lead through change and transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advance diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB)</li> </ul>	
<b>KPIs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in job application rates</li> <li>Develop and launch a candidate experience measure, set baseline and monitor performance - 5% increase year on year</li> <li>Establish an employee referral programme and establish a percentage ratio KPI of successful applicants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve time-to-fill positions</li> <li>Number of managers as a ratio recruitment training. Aim for 80%</li> <li>Number of targeted recruitment campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hire and new to role retention rates (retention over 12 months)</li> <li>Completion of onboarding programme rates (ratio of new starters, aim for over 90%)</li> <li>Establish an onboarding satisfaction survey and measure of success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of employees with targeted development plans</li> <li>He Whare Taumatua indicators achieved</li> <li>Track and improve promotion and movement rates</li> <li>Satisfaction with Leadership Development Programmes</li> <li>Managers' timely responses to performance gap concerns (measure to be established)</li> <li>Monitor growth of mentoring/coaching programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiatives to align roles to WRC mission completed</li> <li>Engagement/culture measure improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turnover rates below 15%</li> <li>Rates of re-employment</li> </ul>

9

Waikato Regional Council

He Manawa Tangata Our People Strategy 2025-2029

## Appendix A: Good Employer Obligations (Local Government Act 2002)

### Schedule 7

#### Local authorities and community boards and their members

Ss 5(1), 41(1), 48, 53(1), 54, 59(2)

#### Part 1 Provisions relating to local authorities and their members

##### 36 Local authority to be good employer

- (1) A local authority, and any other person having responsibility for the selection and management of employees of the local authority, must operate a personnel policy that complies with the principle of being a good employer.
- (2) For the purposes of this clause, a good employer means an employer who operates a personnel policy containing provisions generally accepted as necessary for the fair and proper treatment of employees in all aspects of their employment, including provisions requiring—
- (a) good and safe working conditions; and
  - (b) an equal employment opportunities programme; and
  - (c) the impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment; and
  - (d) recognition of—
    - (i) the aims and aspirations of Māori; and
    - (ii) the employment requirements of Māori; and
    - (iii) the need for greater involvement of Māori in local government employment; and
  - (e) opportunities for the enhancement of the abilities of individual employees; and
  - (f) recognition of the aims and aspirations, and the cultural differences, of ethnic or minority groups; and
  - (g) recognition of the employment requirements of women; and
  - (h) recognition of the employment requirements of persons with disabilities.
- (3) In addition to the requirements specified in subclauses (1) and (2), a local authority, —
- (a) when making an appointment, must give preference to the person who is best suited to the position; and
  - (b) must ensure that all employees maintain proper standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.



He taiao mauriora ▲ **Healthy environment**

He hapori hihiri ▲ **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari ▲ **Strong economy**

Internal Series: IS25/11  
ISSN 2230-4339 (Print)  
ISSN 2230-4347 (Online)  
November 2025 #7614

Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre,  
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand  
[waikatoregion.govt.nz](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz)  
0800 800 401



April 2024

# He Whare Taumatua Our Māori Employment Strategy



### He Whare Taumatua – About our strategy’s name

“He Whare Taumatua” is the name for our Māori Employment Strategy, drawn from the following whakataukī:

#### ***He rākau taumatua he karahuinga manu***

*Many birds flock to a great tree / The birds flocked there because of the sweetness of the tree’s fruit and nectar.*

Taumatua refers to something that supports, empowers, greatly assists, or gives life to someone or something else. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) becoming a whare taumatua connects to our ability to provide culturally appropriate employment experiences, including the wellbeing of our people and our understanding of the significance of cultural identity, community connection and traditional knowledge in promoting wellbeing among Māori. For WRC to become a whare taumatua for all of our kaimahi, but particularly kaimahi Māori, we need to approach Māori employment outcomes differently.

In this strategy, we refer to aspects of the whare taumatua in defining our approach to Māori employment.

Ngā Heke o te Whare are our guiding values. In a whareniui, the heke are the carved panels or rafters that bridge the tāhūhū ridge pole and pakitara (walls). The intricate adorning designs and patterns often convey the identity, histories, and social values of the community that built the meeting house. For the purposes of He Whare Taumatua, the four heke demonstrate our commitment to creating an inclusive, respectful and equitable workplace culture that values Māori cultural perspectives and contributes to the wellbeing and success of all kaimahi, including kaimahi Māori.

Te Tūāpapa is the foundation of He Whare Taumatua. Our tūāpapa covers the work we will do to know whether this strategy achieves its purpose.

Ngā Pou o te Whare are the areas of action we will take. Each of the four pou (Pou Mataaho, Pou Tāhū, Pou Tokomanawa, Pou Tuarongo) provides support and function in He Whare Taumatua. As well as connecting He Whare Taumatua to the traditions and values of Māori that are carried by kaimahi Māori in all they do, these pou connect the purposes and symbolism of each part of the whareniui to the actions we will take to improve Māori employment outcomes at WRC.

# He tīmatanga kōrero

## Introduction

### The driver for a Māori Employment Strategy for Waikato Regional Council.

Local government organisations exist within a Te Tiriti o Waitangi based governance context between the Crown and iwi/hapū.

Waikato Regional Council (WRC) is committed to strengthening partnerships with iwi Māori as a core aspect of our business. Our purpose – Working together for a Waikato region that has a healthy environment, strong economy and vibrant communities – is closely aligned to the aspirations of tangata whenua and a key drawcard for kaimahi Māori wanting to work for their people and te taiao.

We recognise that collaborating effectively with Māori is crucial for delivering services that meet community needs and uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles. A diverse and skilled Māori workforce is essential for our success, ensuring we provide value for money and cater to the wide range of needs within our region.

To address the underrepresentation<sup>1</sup> of Māori in our team and overcome existing barriers, we are implementing a Māori employment strategy. This strategy aims to build a workforce that reflects Māori perspectives, enhances our services, and strengthens our relationships with iwi and Māori communities, thereby supporting better outcomes for all.

Te Uru Kahika | Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa's 2023 report Te Uru Kahika Māori Capability Baseline Report demonstrates that the challenges our council faces are not unique to us but are experienced by many regional councils.

Like all councils, WRC has a clear direction from the Local Government Act 2002 to:

- respond to the employment requirements of Māori
- respond to the aims and aspirations of Māori staff
- grow the representation of Māori working in local government.

WRC is committed to attracting, developing and retaining a talented and thriving Māori workforce, represented at all levels of the organisation. He Whare Taumatua | the Māori Employment Strategy for WRC is our first step to defining how we will rise to this challenge.



<sup>1</sup> This information is detailed further in the Current State section of this strategy.

**Scope**

This strategy has been designed as a korowai Māori to He Manawa Tangata | C3 – Our People Strategy 2021-2025, intending to make the people strategy directly applicable to the experience of kaimahi Māori at WRC. The scope also includes addressing issues that are unique to kaimahi Māori and are relevant to the employment experience of those kaimahi.

This first iteration of He Whare Taumatua | the Māori Employment Strategy and its implementation plan are particularly driven to respond to the need to attract and recruit more Māori to the WRC workforce.

**Timeframe**

This strategy will apply from its adoption in April 2024 until it is fully reviewed in mid-2027. ELT will receive annual progress reports on the action plan and its success indicators.



**Process**

Developing this strategy has involved:

1. reviewing the existing strategic framework at WRC: recruitment processes from role inception to onboarding; the various employment agreements in place at WRC; Māori Partnership Approach 2016 and associated action plan; the cultural competency framework, competency survey and report, and the competency implementation plan; and the draft Independent Assessment Report for WRC as part of the CouncilMark programme
2. considering of the above documents and approaches against the analysis of and recommendations for Māori capability and workforce issues set out in the Te Uru Kahika Māori Capability Baseline Report
3. reviewing recent national strategies relating to Māori Employment, including Te Ara Mahi Māori – Recommendations for the Māori Employment Action Plan; Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission guidance on improving workforce and leadership representation alongside guidance on addressing ethnic pay gaps; Maruiti 2027 Strategy for Mahi Haumarua Aotearoa | Worksafe; and several existing employment strategies for indigenous populations from Aotearoa and Te Whenua Moemoeā | Australia
4. interviewing kaimahi Māori at WRC, the People and Capability and Health and Safety teams, and five members of ELT (kaimahi Māori have also had an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the strategy and implementation plan documents.
5. consulting with the key employment stakeholders at WRC, including the three unions we have collective agreements with.

The lived experiences described by kaimahi Māori at WRC have provided direction in developing the strategy and implementation plan. This has been supplemented by the observations and descriptions arising from interviews with ELT and People and Capability team members.

As a result, this is a strategy that is responsive to our specific context in the Waikato region and as a local government organisation, while also being connected to trends and responses facing the Māori workforce nationally.

## Current state

This is WRC's first Māori employment strategy, but the whakapapa for the strategy reaches back over many years. WRC employed our first specialist Māori role in the mid-1980s as an iwi liaison officer under our predecessor organisation. Our kaupapa Māori team, Tai-ranga-whenua, was established in the mid-2000s and has grown to 6.5FTE. We have also employed a small number of Māori specialist roles across several areas at WRC since the late-2010s to embed Māori perspectives and expertise in specific functional areas. This is in the context of a total workforce headcount of 629 as at February 2024. This well-intended approach demonstrates positive support and recognition of the need to develop, foster and embed organisational capability in te ao Māori across WRC. However, this approach is considered unsustainable and potentially harmful in the long term to the wellbeing of kaimahi Māori operating without the support and guidance of an overarching Māori employment strategy and clear expectations of kaimahi Māori, Māori specialists and Tai-ranga-whenua at WRC.

Te Ara Rangapū Māori | Māori Partnership Approach was signed in 2016 and sets out aspirations for the partnership between WRC and tangata whenua in the region. This includes clear focuses on improving the cultural competency of WRC and ensuring that WRC has a capable workforce to partner with tangata whenua in the region and to understand the aspirations and priorities of te ao Māori in undertaking our work. These expectations from tangata whenua of WRC have been affirmed in the independent assessment of WRC undertaken in 2023 as part of the CouncilMark programme.

WRC has an approved cultural competency framework, underpinned by a survey of staff competency and an approved implementation plan to raise the cultural competency of staff at WRC. We acknowledge that much of the focus of this work has been on the competency of non-Māori rather than investing in the development of our kaimahi Māori. This strategy seeks to build on the work undertaken to date on cultural competency at WRC.

Māori make up approximately 24.2% of the Waikato population, and this proportion of the regional population is growing – projected to be 27.7% by 2033 and 30.2% by 2043.<sup>2</sup> Owing to the significantly younger age profile of Māori and the aging profile of the general population, Māori are increasingly making up a larger share of the working age population. By 2033 the percentage of Māori of working age (63%) will be greater than the percentage of the general population of working age (61%), a gap that is projected to continue to widen through until 2043. Approximately 66% of Māori who whakapapa to tangata whenua of the Waikato region live outside of the region, indicating the potential size of the Māori workforce who may have an interest in returning to the Waikato to work directly or indirectly for their people.

Within WRC's current workforce, only 9.28% of staff identify as Māori. This ranges from 3.70% to 13.13% across our departments at WRC, and 5.88% of our people leaders identify as Māori.<sup>3</sup> From 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024, approximately 6.44% of applicants for advertised roles at WRC identified as Māori – and 10.71% of those successfully appointed to roles at WRC over that same time period identified as Māori. It is clear that the representation of Māori at all levels and in all parts of our organisation falls well below where we would expect given the representation of Māori in our region. We acknowledge the impact this is likely to have on our ability to connect to and serve Māori communities as well as the impact on our partnerships with tangata whenua.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics provided in this section have utilised actual and projected figures based on the 2018 census baseline.

<sup>3</sup> Based on a completion rate of 68.41% for WRC staff, and 63.26% for job applicants.



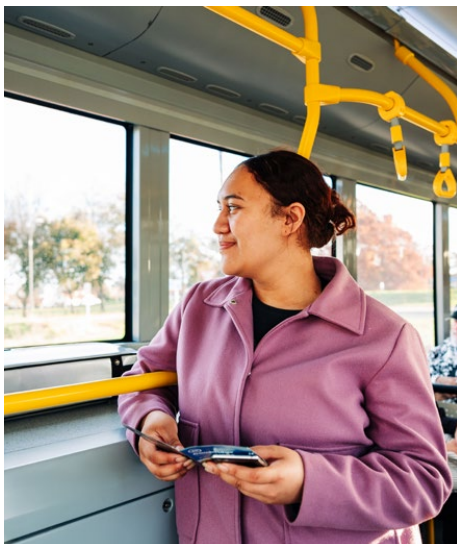
## Te pae tāwhiti Our vision

Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata,  
ko te pae tata whakamaua kia tina  
**Pursue the distant horizon until it's close;  
the near horizon, retain it.**

WRC is an employer of choice for Māori; attracting and retaining a talented and thriving Māori workforce.

Our vision includes:

- Kaimahi Māori feel inspired to work at WRC, valued, supported, and able to see a clear career path, not just a job.
- All kaimahi at WRC will understand and value the relevance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, partnerships with tangata whenua, and te ao Māori perspectives in their work, as well as the contributions of Māori colleagues and communities.
- Tangata whenua trust WRC as a reputable employer for their uri and recommend WRC as an excellent workplace to their whānau.



### Strategy overview

Our strategy aims to enhance Māori representation and participation at all levels within WRC. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where the unique skills and perspectives of kaimahi Māori are valued and leveraged for the benefit of our community. Our three strategic goals to achieve this are set out below.

#### Increase Māori representation

We recognise the need for our workforce to reflect the diversity of our communities. Currently, Māori are underrepresented at WRC, impacting our ability to serve our communities effectively. We plan to tackle the barriers to the recruitment, retention, and development of Māori staff.

#### Utilise Māori expertise

Recognising the importance of pūkenga Māori (skills and knowledge from a te ao Māori perspective), we aim to better understand, value and incorporate these unique perspectives into our work, ensuring they are not overlooked in favour of other skill sets.

#### A culturally responsive environment

We aim to foster a workplace that is culturally aware and aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, where all employees, particularly kaimahi Māori, feel supported and able to contribute effectively. This involves ensuring all staff understand their roles in this context and are equipped to engage respectfully and effectively with Māori communities.



# Ngā heke o te whare

## Our guiding values

**In delivering on this strategy we will act in accordance with these underlying values.**

These values emerged through kōrero with kaimahi Māori at WRC as part of the development of the strategy.

### Tika

#### Doing what is right, just, and fair

Kia ū ki tō Māoritanga

**Hold fast to the teachings of your ancestors.**

We will:

- honour, respect, and value Māori cultural protocols, values, and customs within the organisation
- ensure that our decisions and actions are consistent with the values of our organisation
- uphold the rights and wellbeing of kaimahi Māori.

### Manaakitanga.

#### Hospitality, kindness, and care for others

Tangata takahi manuwahiri, he marae puehu

**People that disrespect their guests soon find they have none.**

We will:

- uplift the mana, dignity and well-being of all kaimahi, including kaimahi Māori, by understanding their needs, being responsive to their concerns, and supporting their career development and aspirations
- create a supportive and inclusive work environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

### Kotahitanga

#### Unity or working together as one

Whaia te kotahitanga, paiheretia ki te rangimārie

**Seek unity. Embrace peace.**

We will:

- recognise and value the diverse pūkenga, experiences, and perspectives that kaimahi, including kaimahi Māori, bring to their work
- foster a sense of common purpose and collaboration among employees, where different contributions are valued equally in pursuit of WRC's goals.

### Ōritetanga

#### Equity and fairness

Mā pango mā whero ka oti ai te mahi

**With collective effort, we achieve**

We will:

- strive to ensure fairness and equity for all kaimahi, including kaimahi Māori, based on the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi)
- implement practices, processes and systems that recognise and respond to the diverse values, experiences, and pūkenga of kaimahi, thereby creating a work environment where everyone has equal opportunities to succeed.



# Te pae tata

## Our three-year horizon

### Ngā pou o te whare

#### Our strategic approach

The following four pou, and the tūāpapa, set out the strategic pathways through which WRC will work to construct He Whare Taumatua.



**Te Tūāpapa  
Foundation to support this  
strategy**

In the first six months after approving this strategy, we will build our underlying data and reporting approach to support the overarching purpose of the strategy as well as assess and map expected changes to our existing recruitment and employment processes. This will set the foundation at WRC for the changes outlined in the following strategic pou.

While we do have some data, this is incomplete and we have low maturity in using this data to make decisions about where we are going, how quickly, and to know we have achieved our goals. In developing this strategy we have looked at our recruitment processes and employment conditions, as well as professional development pathways, to see the ways in which these systems are responsive to Māori. However, a comprehensive assessment is needed before we determine the steps need to improve these.



**He Pou Tuarongo**

This pou supports the ridge pole in the back wall of a meeting house. It sits deepest within the wharenuī and was traditionally the place where learning and wānanga occurred.

We will build on the existing cultural competency work by mapping and developing te ao Māori and Te Tiriti grounded capabilities that will equip leaders to work well within Māori contexts, to nurture Māori staff, and to deliver on our organisational mission.

Articulating the need for a talented and thriving Māori workforce at WRC must be met by an organisation that has maturity in understanding and valuing the diversity, perspective and technical capabilities such a workforce brings.

The existing te ao Māori cultural competency framework, survey and implementation plan set out steps that WRC is undertaking to understand its cultural competency and then to grow this across the organisation. This work is all valuable in creating the right environment for kaimahi Māori to thrive. We know from our kaimahi Māori however that more work is needed in this area specifically to help position WRC as a good employer of Māori.

WRC will strengthen our cultural competency approach to include a stronger focus on technical capabilities related to working within te ao Māori and upholding Te Tiriti for WRC. This pou in particular aims to support the second and third focus areas of this strategy – valuing technical Māori expertise, and ensuring that all kaimahi are equipped to work well within Māori contexts, with Māori staff, and uphold their own Te Tiriti-focused responsibilities

**He Pou Tuarongo** – Cultural competency and te ao Māori capability will see WRC taking steps to ensure kaimahi have the right cultural competency and technical capability to work alongside and support kaimahi Māori, and that WRC has appropriately understood, valued and resourced the technical Māori capabilities that enable the council to deliver on our mission.

**He Pou Tokomanawa**

The pou tokomanawa in a whare tūpuna represents the central post or backbone of the house, providing support to the stability of the whare. It may also symbolise important ancestors or historical tribal narratives.

The strategy considers the all-of-life journey for kaimahi Māori at WRC: from the point at which a role is contemplated and defined, through recruitment and onboarding, to the ongoing experience of employment including employment conditions and wellbeing, focus on professional development, and concluding with offboarding as part of any exit. This strategic pou will guide us to understand how to be a good employer of kaimahi Māori and able to meet the employment outcomes for Māori that we seek, through clear focus on recruitment, retention and development processes.

We know that Māori often look for culturally specific qualities in choosing an employer and a role, and have certain expectations of the recruitment process. We know that Māori experience employment differently to the general population, and have different employment requirements driven by cultural values and outlook that are often not met – negatively impacting on the employment experience. Lastly, we know that Māori seek to grow professionally as part of their employment but that this professional development journey may look different than for non-Māori colleagues, driven by different aspirations, priorities and values.<sup>4</sup> In order to be a good employer, WRC will strive to be more responsive to Māori in each of these three aspects of the employment journey.

**He Pou Tokomanawa** – Recruitment, retention and development sets out the efforts of WRC to understand and respond to the distinct employment requirements, and aims and aspirations, of kaimahi Māori in our workforce to help realise our vision of being an employer of choice for Māori.



<sup>4</sup> Te Ara Mahi Māori provides detail of the recruitment, employment and development needs of Māori at a national level. These findings have been supported through kōrero with kaimahi Māori at WRC.

### He Pou Tāhū

This pou sits at the front wall of the whare and represents vision, guardianship, and connections.

The pou tāhū recognises the critical importance to tangata whenua, education providers, and WRC of forming strong partnerships to invest in the development of the Māori workforce. If we approach our Māori workforce as a strategic partnership, we have the potential to contribute to the aims of both WRC and our Te Tiriti partners.

Tangata whenua grow their people for many years, instilling pūkenga that benefit the tangata whenua and their wider community but also skills that are valuable to local government, central government, private sector interests and industry. WRC can contribute directly to our Te Tiriti-based partnership with tangata whenua in turn by providing work opportunities and investing in the professional development of Māori staff who may contribute these experiences directly to tangata whenua in future.

There is also a strong element of trust. Tangata whenua expect to see their whānau treated with respect, with dignity and with equitable opportunity. WRC should see a measure of success in their own partnership with tangata whenua through whether tangata whenua are willing to recommend to their own people to work at WRC. The opposite may also be true – tangata whenua do not recommend or support their uri to work at WRC, which may reflect a low point in the relationship of the partners.

Māori education providers are also important to the success of this strategy. Institutions like Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Te Wānanga o Raukawa have a strong educational bond with Māori in the Waikato region. These institutes are where many Māori turn for growing their own pūkenga in a way that is distinct to Māori, and increasingly the pūkenga taught here are ones valued by WRC and other government organisations. Mainstream education providers like Waikato University also have strong relationships with taura Māori who have chosen education in Western academic disciplines. Working with education providers to shape the future workforce for WRC and to provide meaningful career pathways for taura once they have completed their studies may work to meet the needs of both WRC and the education institutes.

**He Pou Tāhū** – Strategic employment relationships encourages WRC to work directly with those who have a mutual interest in growing, nurturing and developing the Māori workforce at WRC as well as those who work in areas of shared benefit between Te Tiriti partners.



## He Pou Mataaho

The Pou Mataaho is the front post of the meeting house. It often features intricate carvings and serves as a focal point for the house. This pou can represent leadership, strength, and the face of the community.

In adopting this strategy and delivering on the associated implementation plan, WRC will have an exciting story to tell about the changes we have made to be a better employer of kaimahi Māori and of the opportunities available to Māori interested in working here. This pou sets out how we will re-set our brand as an employer amongst Māori and establish a clear understanding of the aims and vision underlying this strategy amongst new and existing kaimahi.

There will be existing, well-established perceptions of WRC as an employer of Māori, amongst those who work here currently or have previously, those who may be interested in a role with us in future, and their whānau. As part of developing this strategy, we have sought to understand some of these perceptions through engaging with existing kaimahi Māori at WRC but there is more we can do to understand our positioning in the minds of the Māori workforce. Understanding these perceptions is key to how we will begin to tell our story differently for a Māori audience.

Ensuring our recruitment collateral speaks to a Māori audience is key to increasing our visibility and suitability as an employer amongst Māori applicants, and to identifying the skills and experience we are seeking more closely with the Māori workforce. We will work to reframe our offerings, both organisationally and on a role-specific basis, to better align with the aims, aspirations, pūkenga and experiences of Māori applicants.

Our kaimahi Māori have shared with us some of the key reasons they work at WRC, and of the benefits they can see the council contributing to te ao Māori. This is a story we aren't telling well but one that is important to attracting and retaining more Māori staff in future, particularly those who whakapapa within the Waikato region. We will ensure we are telling a story about the impact of our work at WRC in a way that resonates with Māori audiences, and support our kaimahi Māori to tell this story on behalf of WRC in the communities which they are part of.

It's incumbent on us to bring our wider workforce and our communities along with why we are taking this approach. We will act to foster understanding of the importance of a thriving and talented Māori workforce as part of WRC, and of the different steps we are taking to achieve this outcome.

**He Pou Mataaho** – Brand, promotion, and communications sets out how we tell the story of this strategy, both to attract new Māori talent to WRC and to foster understanding of this approach within our wider workforce.



### Monitoring and understanding progress

Achieving our vision will take time and is dependent on long term factors like expected changes in demography in the Waikato region, significant changes in the size and nature of the Māori workforce, and a continuing evolution in how councils value and uphold Māori capability.

To ensure we are focused on short and medium term steps to implement the strategy and achieve our vision, we have approved the accompanying implementation plan (Appendix A) to this strategy and adopted the following progress indicators. We will establish baseline results as a priority within the first 3-6 months after approving this strategy, and then set annual targets for the next three years. An early item in the implementation plan is establishing agreed evaluation standards for each indicator below.

Key performance indicators	Baseline	Annual Target
Percentage of WRC kaimahi who identify as Māori (measured at organisation, department, and people leader levels)	9.28% <sup>5</sup>	TBC
Percentage of kaimahi Māori who take up leadership development training, secondments and internal promotion opportunities	To be established	TBC
Percentage of kaimahi Māori undertaking professional development related to pūkenga Māori	To be established	TBC
Job satisfaction of kaimahi Māori (annual survey outcomes)	To be established	TBC
Cultural competency survey results <sup>6</sup>	55% 43%	TBC
Percentage of staff who have completed cultural competency training and induction modules	To be established	TBC
Completion of position description review to incorporate cultural competency and Māori/Te Tiriti capability requirements	To be established	TBC
Employment conditions specific to te ao Māori	No specific provisions	TBC
Percentage of kaimahi taking up kaupapa Māori wellbeing services	To be established	TBC

<sup>5</sup> This is the all of organisation baseline only.

<sup>6</sup> Aligned to existing indicators in Te Ara Tupu



## Initiatives and actions to deliver He Whare Taumatua

Name of Activity or Project	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeframes	Responsibility
<b>Te Tūāpapa</b>			
1. Develop/refine ethnicity data reporting system for WRC and encourage all staff to provide updated information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish clear baselines for Māori staff at WRC to enable regular reporting, target setting, monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>	0-3 months	P&C/Leadership
2. Establish data dictionary practices for each of the performance indicators set out in the strategy, with a focus on quarterly and annual performance reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular reporting is enabled on delivery against the strategy and WRC have confidence in the monitoring and evaluation to be able to make decisions.</li> </ul>	0-6 months	TRW/P&C/ Social and Economic Science
Name of Activity or Project	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeframes	Responsibility
<b>He Pou Tuarongo: Cultural competency and te ao Māori capability</b>			
3. Develop position statements for Te Tiriti, Māori capability and cultural competency across each functional area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff, teams and departments are clear on how they contribute to WRC's partnerships with tangata whenua, deliver on Te Tiriti equity, and uphold the organisation's Te Tiriti obligations.</li> <li>WRC can map required competency and capability sets for delivering on Te Tiriti outcomes, at individual, team, department and organisation levels.</li> </ul>	6-18 months	TRW
4. Update all job descriptions to reflect the required competency and capability expected of the role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff are clear on the level they are expected to perform at with regard to Te Tiriti outcomes, and responsiveness to te ao Māori capability.</li> <li>WRC recruits appropriately to ensure it holds these capabilities in its workforce.</li> <li>Staff growth and development is guided by the cultural competency and Māori capability functions specific to their role.</li> </ul>	12-24 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
5. Ensure internal guidance for the sizing of roles with defined Māori technical capabilities is well understood and applied consistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers are supported to make appropriate decisions when considering the range of capabilities and experience candidates bring when recruiting.</li> </ul>	12-18 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
6. Provide guidance for hiring managers on understanding and valuing technical Māori capabilities and lived Māori experiences as part of ensuring pūkenga Māori are appropriately considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers are supported to make appropriate decisions when considering the range of capabilities and experience candidates bring when recruiting.</li> <li>WRC recruitment outcomes reflect a wide range of skills and experience, including prioritising pūkenga Māori and Māori experiences in composing teams.</li> </ul>	12-18 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW



7. Provide a system to remunerate cultural leadership undertaken for WRC outside the scope of agreed job requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff who undertake cultural leadership roles at WRC outside of their substantive role are appropriately remunerated for doing so. This system is reflective of the skills, experience and effort of undertaking these roles for WRC.</li> <li>Organisational capability in te ao Māori at WRC is sustained through appropriately recognising the contribution of individuals to this. For example, an organisation that can offer its services and a customer contact pathway in te reo Māori will be reliant on the individuals in its workforce.</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
8. As part of management essentials toolbox, develop guidance for managers with regard to understanding and undertaking leadership within te ao Māori contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Māori staff feel their cultural values are upheld within their management relationships.</li> <li>Managers are confident in how they support Māori team members to succeed and grow in a way that is reflective of and upholds their Māoritanga.</li> </ul>	12-18 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
9. Clearly define the role and purpose of Tai-ranga-whenua in setting organisational settings with regard to Te Tiriti and te ao Māori at WRC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tai-ranga-whenua has an established and well-understood function at WRC that sets organisational positions on things Māori and things Tiriti.</li> <li>Kaimahi Māori are less exposed to being treated as the authoritative source on all things Māori, and enabled to focus on their substantive role.</li> <li>WRC achieves consistency and continuity in key te ao Māori practices.</li> </ul>	0-6 months	TRW
10. Provide questions relating to managing and leading kaimahi Māori, and supporting success of Māori, as part of interviewing toolbox.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC identifies applicants that can support and grow its Māori workforce as a priority through recruitment</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
11. Provide questions relating to cultural competency and te ao Māori capability, relevant to the given job family/function, as part of interviewing toolbox.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pūkenga Māori, experience delivering on Te Tiriti outcomes and partnering with Māori are valued and prioritised as relevant to roles at WRC through recruitment processes.</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
12. Update cultural competency framework to reflect competencies required for managing and supporting kaimahi Māori at WRC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cultural competency framework has defined a clear set of competencies expected of staff and mapped professional development/training opportunities to achieve these.</li> </ul>	6-18 months	TRW



13. Ensure revised cultural competency implementation plan is focused on delivering the cultural competency requirements identified through the development of this strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next iteration of WRC's cultural competency implementation plan has been designed to deliver on this strategy and is actively contributing to how WRC is delivering on the strategy's vision.</li> </ul>	12-18 months	TRW
14. Develop a detailed workforce plan for Māori specialist roles required at WRC, and for technical Māori capabilities required across all roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC clearly understands the contribution of pūkenga Māori and Māori specialists to its business, and has invested in developing its existing and future workforce to meet these needs.</li> <li>WRC can work with tangata whenua, agencies and education providers to ensure that these workforce needs are able to be met as future business demands come online.</li> </ul>	18-24 months	P&C/Leadership and TRW
Name of Activity or Project	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeframes	Responsibility
He Pou Tokomanawa: Recruitment, retention, development			
15. Undertake a comprehensive assessment of existing recruitment practices and identify practice improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC understand the structural barriers to Māori success in recruitment and have a clear programme to remedy these.</li> <li>Once implemented, WRC positions will be more readily accessible to interested Māori applicants and recruitment at WRC will be undertaken more equitably.</li> </ul>	0-3 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
16. Set out identified provisions for employment agreements to support upcoming negotiation/change processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment terms and conditions offered by WRC are responsive to the distinct employment requirements of kaimahi Māori.</li> <li>Kaimahi Māori feel their employment requirements are met by WRC and that managers are able to provide appropriate support to them as Māori.</li> </ul>	0-3 months	P&C
17. Undertake a review of current onboarding systems to ensure responsiveness to Māori.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Onboarding systems are well-understood for the way in which they are experienced by Māori, and improvements to this approach have been mapped and implemented by WRC.</li> </ul>	0-6 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
18. Undertake an assessment to determine whether WRC has an ethnic pay gap and if so, develop an action plan for remedying this (may include connections to other actions in this implementation plan).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MWRC understands pay equity issues between Māori and non-Māori staff, if any.</li> <li>Clear action is in place to remedy ethnic pay equity issues at WRC and ensure staff are paid equitably regardless of ethnicity.</li> <li>Actions to remedy ethnic pay equity are connected to other pay equity initiatives, to ensure intersectional pay equity issues are appropriately resolved (e.g. wāhine Māori, tāngata whaikaha).</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C

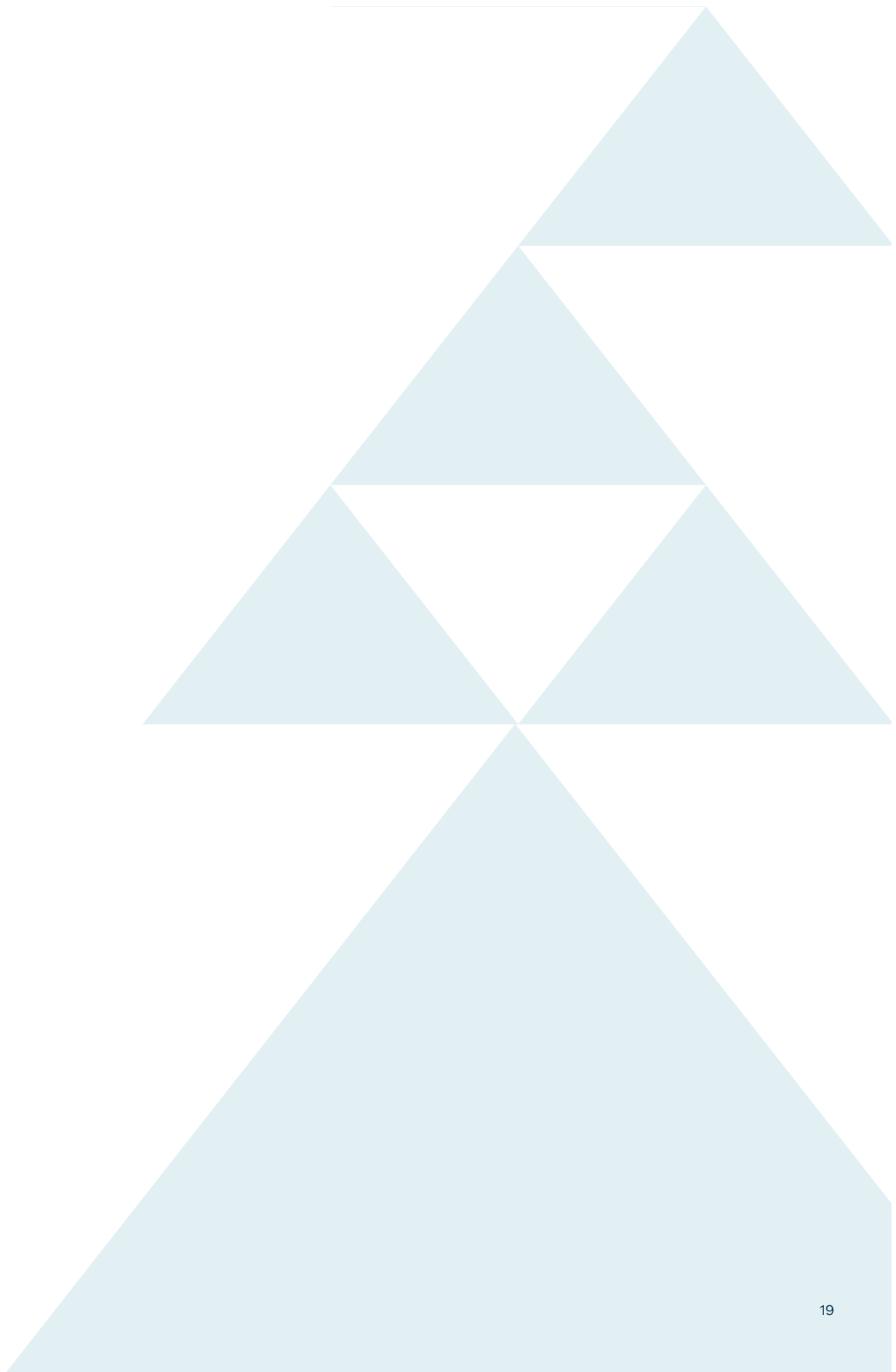


19. Develop and pilot a talent management system for WRC to support Māori employment in the right role, and progression at the right time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC can identify opportunities for Māori applicants and kaimahi Māori based on their pūkenga and experiences, aims and aspirations. This supports regular connection with Māori talent inside and outside the organisation to connect to future roles, including professional development pathways.</li> </ul>	12-24 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
20. Develop a policy position to support staff to invest in developing and enhancing their technical Māori capabilities, acknowledging this may not be through traditional professional development mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kaimahi are able to undertake professional development, focused on Māori methods and pūkenga, that are appropriate to those capabilities (for example, kura reo, marae-based mātauranga development).</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
21. Ensure leadership programme is fit-for-purpose for Māori leadership values and skills, and support Māori access to this programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing leadership programme is reviewed to include appropriate modules informed by Māori leadership values and skills.</li> <li>WRC increases the opportunity available for Māori to access this programme to foster more Māori in leadership throughout the organisation.</li> </ul>	0-12 months	TRW in conjunction with P&C/L&D
22. Undertake a review of the Health and Safety policy and wellbeing services provided by WRC to ensure suitability for Māori staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC will have suitable policy provisions for understanding cultural safety breaches, a system for managing these breaches and providing a remedy.</li> <li>Wellbeing services available to support staff will include kaupapa Māori providers and be adaptable to the wellbeing needs of Māori staff.</li> </ul>	P&C/H&S	
Name of Activity or Project	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeframes	Responsibility
<b>He Pou Tāhū: Strategic employment relationships</b>			
23. Develop relationship instruments with tangata whenua relating to joint employment and workforce goals, and opportunities at WRC for tangata whenua members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC strengthens its ability to recruit, retain and grow kaimahi Māori through partnership with the tangata whenua of kaimahi.</li> <li>WRC identifies and contributes to shared employment outcomes with tangata whenua in the Waikato region.</li> </ul>	6-18 months	TRW
24. Develop relationship instruments with Māori education providers (TWOA, TWOA, and Waikato University) with regard to pathways for graduates and aligning the focus of WRC and education providers on pūkenga Māori.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC can articulate specific pūkenga Māori being focused on through education providers and the connection of those pūkenga to its workforce.</li> <li>Clear pathways exist for taura from education providers to enter the workforce at WRC, and the connection of their chosen study to employment opportunities.</li> </ul>	12-18 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW



25. Undertake regular reporting to tangata whenua partners on the status of the Māori workforce at WRC and numbers of tangata whenua members employed by the council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partnership between WRC and tangata whenua is supported through regular progress reporting to enable future decision-making.</li> </ul>	12-18 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
26. Formalise the role and function of the Māori Staff Network at WRC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kaimahi Māori at WRC have a space to connect and nourish as Māori, and an opportunity to influence the organisation's management direction collectively as Māori.</li> </ul>	0-6 months	TRW
Name of Activity or Project	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeframes	Responsibility
He Pou Mataaho: Brand, communication and promotion			
27. Undertake research with a sample of the available Māori workforce to WRC to understand perceptions of WRC amongst Māori and the positioning available to WRC amongst this workforce segment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council understands how it is viewed by Māori and what Māori want from potential employment at WRC. This is the platform on which WRC can then define its distinct offering to Māori in order to become an employer of choice.</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
28. Ensure WRC employee value proposition is focused on the distinct employment requirements, and aims and aspirations of Māori applicants and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The EVP has been revised to be informed about Māori employment requirements, and aims and aspirations, and speaks directly to Māori applicants and staff.</li> </ul>	12-18 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
29. Provide key messaging for all recruitment to ensure the role is appealing to Māori applicants, is focused on what WRC can offer Māori, and describes the Te Tiriti-based working environment WRC strives for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC recruitment collateral is clear for Māori applicants on the contribution they can make to WRC, how their pūkenga and experience will be valued, and the benefits of working for WRC as experienced by Māori.</li> </ul>	0-6 months	P&C in conjunction with TRW
30. Develop a communications plan internally to support the aims of this strategy, including the rationale for changing practices and growing the Māori workforce at WRC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All WRC staff understand the strategy, including why WRC is seeking to grow and develop its Māori workforce.</li> <li>Staff understand their role in upholding the strategy and are clear on their competency/capability uplift focus areas.</li> </ul>	0-3 months	P&C/TRW/Comms
31. Provide a range of key messages for Māori staff and those interfacing with Māori communities to support connecting the work of WRC to whānau.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kaimahi Māori are well-supported to be advocates for working at WRC in connecting with whanaunga and whānau.</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C/TRW/Comms
32. Develop a suite of 'good news stories' about the experiences of kaimahi Māori at WRC to support attracting new Māori talent to the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC recruitment is focused on Māori and the experiences of kaimahi Māori already working at WRC to support new Māori talent seeing themselves in the organisation and the contribution they can make.</li> </ul>	6-12 months	P&C/TRW/Comms







He taiao mauriora ▲ **Healthy environment**

He hapori hihiri ▲ **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari ▲ **Strong economy**

Printed June 2024 #7453

Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre,  
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand  
0800 800 401 [waikatoregion.govt.nz](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz)

**7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS**

**RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**

**HE TŪTOHUNGA | RECOMMENDATION:**

- That in accordance with section 48(1) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987* (Act) and the interests protected by section 6 or 7 of that Act, the public is excluded from the following parts of this meeting. The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public are set out below:

Meeting item no. and subject	Grounds for excluding the public	Reason for excluding the public
<b>7.1 - Chief Executive KPIs Quarter Three Update</b>	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons	section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7
<b>7.2 - Success of Organisation changes - Chief Executive KPI2</b>	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons  s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities  s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7
<b>7.3 - Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process</b>	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons  s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including	section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7

	commercial and industrial negotiations)	
<p>2. That the Independent Consultant, QLG Advisory (Paul Loof) remains in this meeting after the public has been excluded because of their knowledge of the items to be discussed. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant to those matters because of its specialised nature and the benefit to be gained from expert advice.</p>		

## **8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA**

<b>Unuhia, unuhia</b>	<b>Draw on, draw on,</b>
<b>Unuhia mai te uru tapu nui</b>	<b>Draw on to the supreme sacredness</b>
<b>kia wātea, kia māmā,</b>	<b>To clear, to free</b>
<b>te ngākau, te tinana, te hinengaro,</b>	<b>our heart, body and soul</b>
<b>i te ara takatū</b>	<b>Our pathway prepared</b>
<b>Koia rā e Rongo</b>	<b>Lo, there is peace</b>
<b>e whakairia ake ki runga</b>	<b>suspended high above</b>
<b>kia tina! TINA!</b>	<b>manifest!</b>
<b>Haumi ē, hui ē, TĀIKI ē!</b>	<b>draw together!</b>
	<b>Affirm!</b>