



## COMMUNITIES

**Part B**

**Togetherness. Kotahitanga. Unity.** These are at the heart of our community vision. We want to connect with others and work together to affect real change in our communities. Community spirit, connection, vibrancy and safety are important to us. Voter turnout is low and crime rates are higher than the national average, yet almost all of us know someone we can rely on in a time of need.

**APPROXIMATELY 99% OF NEW ZEALANDERS** believe they **know someone they can rely on in a time of need**; much higher than the OECD average of 88%.



Source: OECD Better Life Index 2015.

**DID YOU KNOW** - New Zealand has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. When people feel safe they are more likely to talk to their neighbours, trust others living in the area, use public transport and amenities, and generally participate in their community.

## VOTER TURNOUT

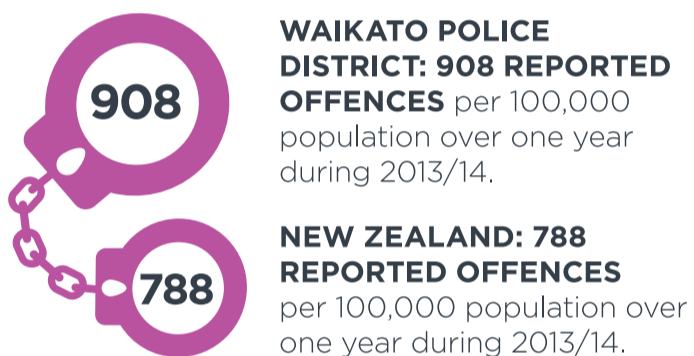
is a measure of civic engagement. It shows how connected and invested we are in the issues facing our community.

**Increasing** overall for Hamilton City Council, Matamata-Piako District Council and Waikato Regional Council.

**Decreasing** overall for Waikato District Council.



Voter turnout of enrolled electors in the 2013 local body elections.



**WE FEEL SAFE.** The Waikato Region scored **66%** in the perception of safeness index in 2013.

*There are a lot of people willing to work together to address the issues.*  
Hamilton Vital Signs community engagement participant.

## COMMUNITY VOICES - WE WANT TO:

Identify how we can **work in partnership** across the public, business and community sectors.

Address **isolation** for families, youth and older people.

Address **issues with transport** to make better links within and between rural and urban areas.

## CONNECTEDNESS AND COMMUNITY

**The Western Community Centre in Nawton, Hamilton, brings people together. It is the front door to a diverse community, a place where people can connect with their neighbours and contribute to a feeling of togetherness and safety.**

The centre is owned by the community, bringing together more than 250 volunteers and 10 staff members. Last year the centre had over 60,000 visits with more than 70 local schools, community groups, clubs, organisations and churches making use of the facilities. It is a hub for connecting people, and it is helping to build a thriving, healthy, vibrant and self-reliant community.

Neil Tolan, Manager of the Western Community Centre, says it's about working at things on a micro level. "Small actions make a big difference. If our neighbourhoods are working well, we know each other and can talk to one another. That goes a long way to creating a positive place to live."

People need a place to come together, and Neil says the community centre provides just that. Initiatives like the \$10 vege co-op bring in families from far and wide to access affordable, healthy kai each week. The parcels are packed by volunteers, who are in turn

provided with morning tea by another local community group for people with head injuries. It's a circle of connection and community belonging - the small things that make a big difference.

It's that kind of place: a place where people make things happen, where community means connection and support. Our kind of place.



Neil Tolan - Western Community House

**How different would our communities be if everyone knew their neighbours?**