



Briefing paper to Members of Parliament in the Manawatū-Whanganui Region

Kei ngā Minita, tēnā koutou

Tēnā koutou e hāpai ana i ngā kaupapa huhua o tēnei ao hurihuri; otirā i ngā pae tata me ngā pae tawhiti e whakaarotia ana, koia rā hei whāinga mā tātou. Nei rā te whakamihi atu ki a koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

To the Ministers – greetings

We acknowledge you for uplifting the many policies, causes and matters within this ever changing world; the short term and long term goals that are being considered for us all. We acknowledge you, greetings to all.

Congratulations on your election. This paper provides you with an introduction to the Manawatū-Whanganui (Horizons) Region and some of the key opportunities and challenges ahead of us. We look forward to talking in more detail and to working with you for the benefit of our collective communities.



Horizons Chair
Rachel Keedwell



Horowhenua Mayor
Bernie Wanden



Manawatū Mayor
Helen Worboys



Palmerston North Mayor
Grant Smith



Rangitikei Mayor
Andy Watson



Ruapehu Mayor
Don Cameron



Tararua Mayor
Tracey Collis



Whanganui Mayor
Hamish McDouall

OUR REGION

Lies in the heart of central New Zealand and covers **22,200km²** - spanning the North Island from the east coast to the west coast, from **Ruapehu** in the north to **Horowhenua** in the south.

We have **three major river systems**, the **Rangitikei, Whanganui, and Manawatū**, and over **226 lakes**, and the mountains of the Central Plateau.

The majority of our **250,000 residents** live in the larger urban centres of **Palmerston North (88,300)** and **Whanganui (47,300)**.

We have significant district centres in **Levin, Dannevirke, Feilding, Marton, and Taumarunui**. Smaller rural towns and communities are also a feature.

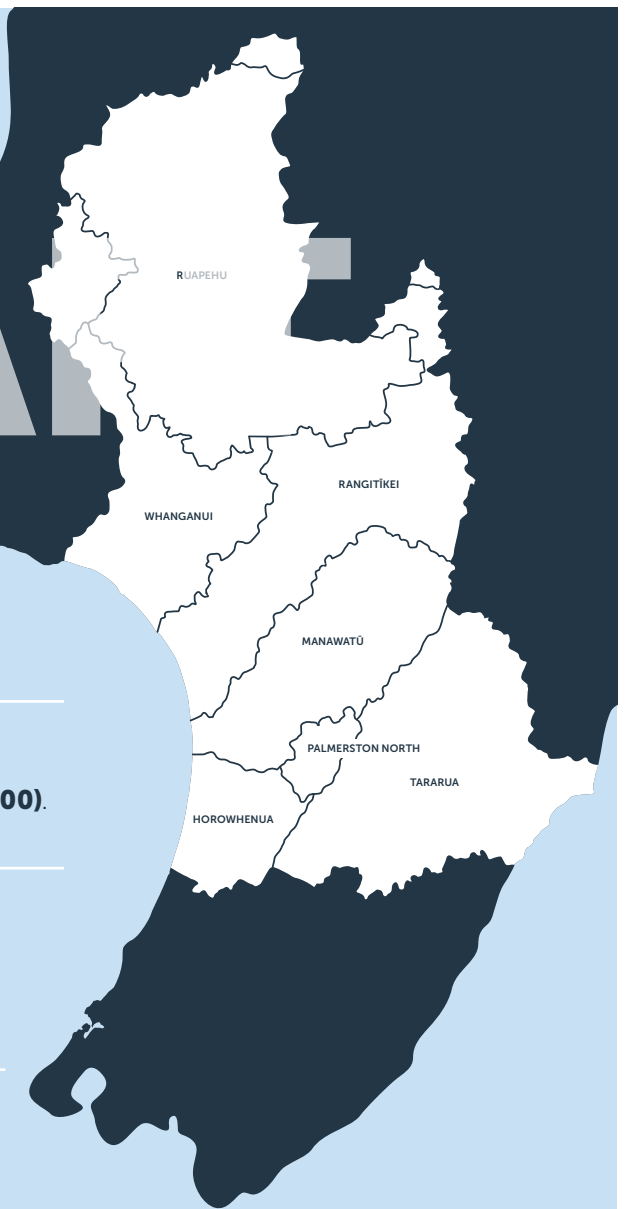
We are home to over **25 iwi** and numerous **hapū**. The inalienable connection of **tangata whenua** to land and water in the region is a critical element of our past and future.

We are increasingly diverse, with **126 languages spoken** in **Palmerston North** at the time of the last census.

Our population is growing with the number likely to exceed **280,000 by 2030**. Growth stimulates our economy and simultaneously places demands on our infrastructure, particularly housing. We have **seven district/city councils** and **one regional council**.

60% of our land area is **hill country** supporting two national parks (**Tongariro and Whanganui**), significant native bush, plantation forestry, and sheep and beef production.

Our fertile lowland floodplains provide a significant proportion of **New Zealand's highest quality soils**, growing high value horticultural crops, and supporting dairy farming and arable cropping.





MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI REGION

COVID-19

RESPONSE

We are organised to respond to COVID-19 and civil defence and emergency management emergencies.

We have an established and well-functioning civil defence network connected to both the National Emergency Management Agency and to local communities.

We have a Regional Leadership Group with a strategy and action plan in place, which we are happy to brief you and the Minister for Emergency Management on.

We have acted to include iwi/Māori participation in the Regional Leadership Group and at regional and local civil defence and emergency management levels.

Iwi/Māori were instrumental in our welfare response during lockdown.

RECOVERY

The region established a Recovery Taskforce comprising experienced leaders from iwi/Māori, industry, local government, central government and economic development agencies. The Taskforce has produced a recovery strategy and regularly updates statistics on the economic and social condition of the region via the Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Indicators website, www.mwri.co.nz.

The recovery strategy identified three phases – survive, revive, then thrive. The eight largest projects in the survive phase are up and running with critical

investment from the Government's Infrastructure, Jobs for Nature, Climate Resilience, and Provincial Growth funds. A further suite of projects are close to inception.

The recovery strategy is attached. We would welcome the opportunity to brief you and Ministers.



Manawatū-Whanganui Region (Post-COVID-19) Economic Recovery Strategy

“WHAT”

3 Phases

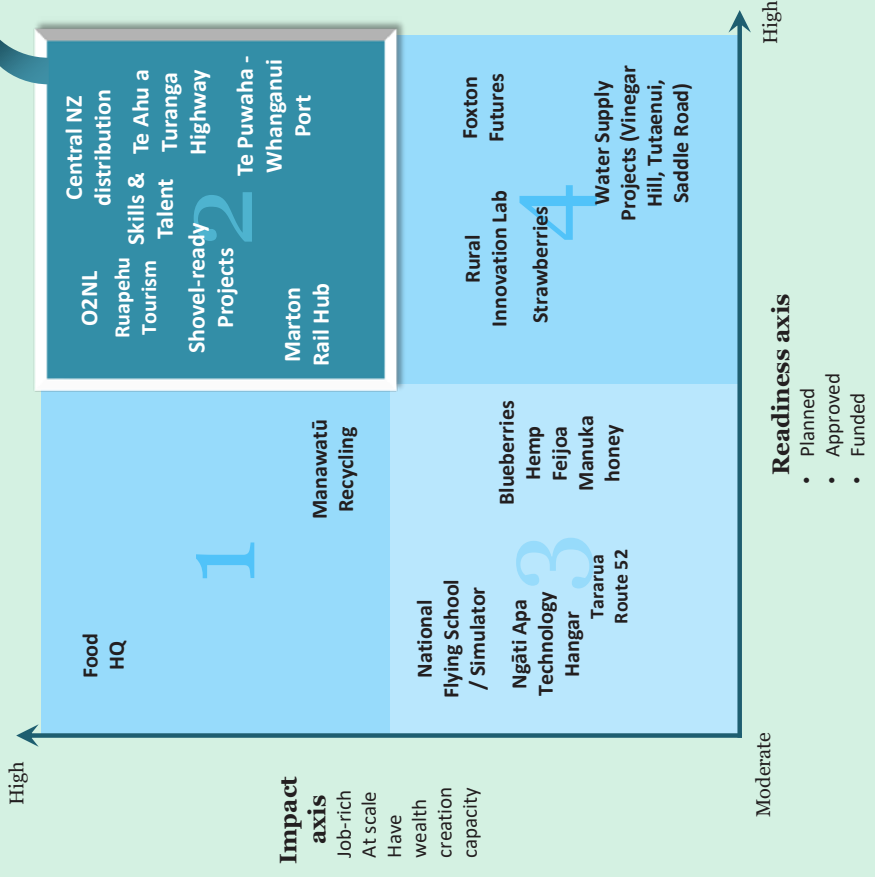
- Survive**
 - Keep people in their jobs; keep businesses alive
- Revive**
 - Keep people in work; provide work for businesses suffering from the COVID downturn
- Thrive**
 - Create new, valuable jobs. Build vigorous, productive businesses. Achieve ambitious regional goals.

3 Work Plans

- Survive** (0-6 months)
 - Short-term
 - Cash
 - Advice
- Revive** (6-12 months)
 - Medium-term
 - Jobs
 - Businesses
- Thrive** (12+ months)
 - Long-term
 - Resilience
 - Future-proof



Priority Projects



Box 2 – Project Detail

Projects	Investment \$	Estimated Jobs	Impact
Central NZ distribution – Regional Freight Ring Road and Central North Island Freight Hub - significant development project: new KiwiRail distribution hub, new regional freight ring road Lead: PNCC – Heather Shatter	c. \$3-3.5 billion (public and commercial)	c. 350 for construction	Freight efficiency and connectivity across central New Zealand and ports, reduced freight costs, reduced carbon emissions, major wealth and job creation
SH1 – Otaki to North of Levin (O2NL) – major new alignment for SH1 around Levin Lead: Horowhenua District Council – David Clapperton	c. \$800 million	c. 300 over 5 years for construction	Critical north-south connection, freight efficiency, safety and hazard resilience, major wealth and job creation through processing, manufacturing and logistics growth
Ruapehu Tourism - increasing Tourism revenue from \$180m to \$400m per year Lead: Ruapehu District Council – Warren Furner	c. \$300-\$400 million	Retain c.150, Create c.750	Facilities and tourism services development throughout Ruapehu and wider supporting region
Te Puwaha - Whanganui Port - major project with port redevelopment, marine precinct, skills hub, all guided by Tupua te Kawa Lead: Whanganui District Council – Kim Fell	c. \$200 million	c. 100 for construction	Enabling marine servicing and manufacturing, regeneration of industrial area, enhance health and wellbeing of the Whanganui River, significant job, skills and training opportunities
Te Ahu a Turanga Highway (Manawatū George Highway replacement) - key national arterial link east-west Lead: NZTA – Lornie Dalziel	c. \$600-700 million	c.350 for construction	Critical east-west connector, freight efficiency, safety, major wealth and job creator during and post construction
Shovel-ready Projects - significant bundle of 88 environmental and infrastructure projects across the region Leads: Various	c. \$1 billion	c.15,000	Critical focus is on job creation, infrastructure improvement and environmental sustainability
Marton Rail Hub - significant opportunity linked to forestry logistics and products Lead: Rangitikei District Council – Peter Beggs	c. \$14.5 million	c.90 for construction and rail hub operations	Key stimulator of forestry logistics and manufacturing opportunities
Skills & Talent – Regional leadership and coordination, local projects. Significant skills projects established across the region with central coordination through Regional Skills and Talent Leadership Group	Operational cost only	Enabling role	Directly matching labour opportunities and demands with people, strong effective regional network covering Iwi / Maori, business, EDAs, government

“WHY”

What has the A25 Refresh work told us about how we should work together?

Our leaders tell us:

- Have ambition for the future
- Be a joined-up region with a common voice to Government
- Take a region-wide approach – no one left behind
- Use both economic and social wellbeing indicators
- Get out of our silos and collaborate, but stick to our swim lanes
- Have a coordinated/common approach to government
- The importance of Iwi/Māori to the projects and the region’s economic future

What has the A25 Refresh work told us about our priorities?

We can create a strong regional comparative advantage with an ambition beyond the ordinary:

- Enhanced agriculture AND Food-tech expertise
- Transport AND a vision of a Central NI hub
- Restored tourism AND connection to the NZ lifestyle
- Emerging Māori economy AND an accelerated approach
- Basic training AND a focus on a high-skilled workforce
- Enhanced agricultural productivity AND an enhanced, sustainable environment

The Long Term Destiny of the Region

The destiny of Manawātū-Whanganui is to be a growth centre at a national scale

The “Pillars”

Creating wealth in a sustainable future:

- **Sustainable food and fibre production** – nature-based strategies
- **Food-tech and agri-tech** – value-added production
- **Visitor/Tourism** – value over volume
- **Māori Economy** – Māori-driven enterprises
- **Specialised Services and Manufacturing** – e.g. National Simulator, Manfield Centre, Whanganui Manufacturing Cluster

Supporting the creation of wealth, making it possible:

- **Transportation** – connection, hubbing, access
- **Education, learning and skills** – strengthening the labour market
- **Connectivity** – integrating the rural and urban areas
- **Community Infrastructure** – modernising ageing infrastructure e.g. Three Waters
- **Energy and environmental sustainability** – e.g. Manawātū Recycling Centre, wind and hydrogen power

The “Bearers”

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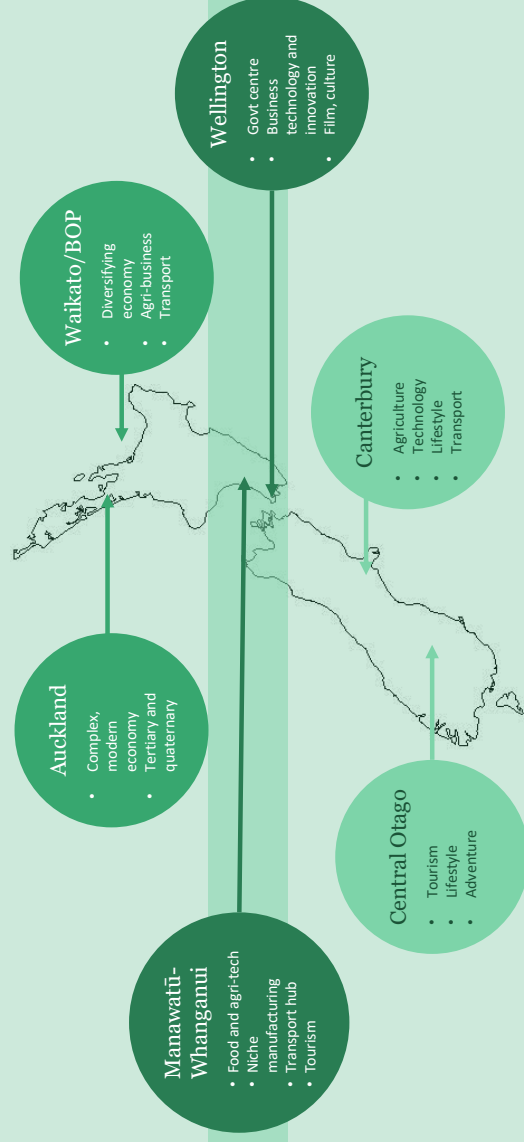
Activating Central Government channels, through:

- Senior Regional Official
- Recovery and economic growth funds
- Public sector lead
- Senior public servants
- Political relationships

Partnering for success by everyone playing their role:

- Working closely together with industry, Iwi/Māori, local and central government.
- Staying in our swim lanes
- Sharing resources
- Sharing success and credit

A Glimpse of the Future - New Zealand’s “Growth Bubbles”



“HOW”

Optimising success by:

- Having a focus and a plan
- Utilising key data on economic and social impacts of COVID-19
- Connection to Central Government
- Strong connection with industry and the private sector
- Working with Iwi/Māori throughout projects
- Visionary and robust regional projects
- Using government funding to leverage private sector investment for the long-term

What are our roles?

Survive

- Jobs and business retention
- EDAs, Chamber of Commerce and Government agencies (MSD, TPK, etc)

Revive

- Employment creation and business support
- Councils, EDAs, Iwi/Māori and Government agencies (PDU, MPI, TPK, NZTA, MBIE)

Thrive

- Create new valuable jobs and businesses in key areas
- Recovery Task Force/A25 - advocacy, support and connection for regional projects
- Better together – in partnership with leads, partnering for delivery with EDAs, sector groups, councils, Government agencies, Iwi/Māori agencies and private sector enterprises

Role of the Task Force/A25

- Championing of a regional vision
- Advocacy for a regional plan and priorities and Government resources
- Thought leadership and stakeholder connection
- Facilitation of formal partnerships, joint ventures and relationships



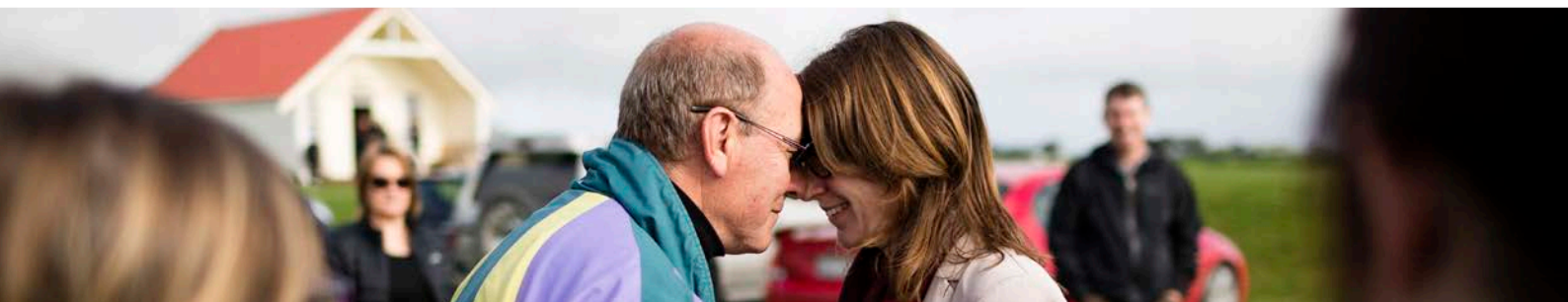
MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI REGION

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING

Our environment is a critical foundation for the region, supporting our health and wellbeing, and our economy. It has its own intrinsic value.

The opportunities and challenges ahead of us are numerous and include:

- The impacts of climate change will be a significant influence, impacting everything from our economy through to our natural environment. As a region, we are committed to working with our communities to both reduce our carbon footprint and to respond and adapt to a changing climate.
- We have established a regional climate change action committee comprising all councils and tangata whenua participants. Our focus is implementing an action plan. Our first move this year is a region-wide vulnerability assessment. We welcome an opportunity to brief you and the Minister for Climate Change.
- In common with the rest of New Zealand, the region is responding to changes in freshwater quality and availability. The region is in the process of implementing both regional and national freshwater policy.
- We have also invested, alongside Government, in over \$40 million of water-related shovel ready projects. We are committed to a key role for tangata whenua in freshwater improvement.



MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI REGION

OUR CULTURAL WELLBEING

We continue to grow our cultural diversity across the region and particularly in the larger centres. This is increasingly reflected in the workplaces and institutions of the region. Refugee resettlement occurs at a number of locations.

Tangata whenua

There are numerous iwi and hapū with interests in the region.

Iwi/hapū provide social, cultural, environmental and economic services to their people and to communities across the region. The importance of Māori business and iwi and hapū entities to future regional prosperity and our ability to respond to the challenges like climate change cannot be overstated.

There are increasing moves to shared approaches in decision making, with local government acknowledging that there is still a long way to go.

During the response to COVID-19, iwi played a significant role in the distribution of community welfare.

Treaty of Waitangi settlements continue, with a number of significant claims yet to be resolved. The region is supportive of the ongoing work by both iwi and the Crown to settle these.



MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI REGION

OUR SOCIAL WELLBEING

Along with much of New Zealand, we grapple with a range of social opportunities and challenges.

Key for the region in the next few years will be:

- Recovery from COVID-19
- Developing and retaining our skills and talent
- Responding to our housing pressures
- Maintaining our connections

SKILLS AND TALENT

Developing and retaining skills and talent is a key enabler of regional prosperity. It is a driver of economic and social wellbeing.

There are now significant Te Ara Mahi projects across every district in the region.

A Regional Skills and Talent Leadership Group is in place at a regional scale, supported via MBIE and connected through to the Lead Public Official, the Ministry for Social Development, and Accelerate25/Te Pae Tawhiti.

We look forward to working with you and ministers in this important area.

HOUSING

The demand for housing (to buy and rent) is high and remains a real challenge for communities. Demand is not limited to the main centres of Palmerston North and Whanganui, but is common across the region. Housing stocks are inadequate and there is a significant lack of affordable homes that meet modern standards.

House prices continue to rise sharply. While they are generally more affordable than other parts of New Zealand, the rate of increase is high and properties are increasingly out of reach for many.

There is no one solution to the housing challenge. A joined up approach from local, regional and central government is critical.



MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI REGION

OUR ECONOMIC WELLBEING

OUR REGION HAS SEEN:

- Strong GDP growth though generally not as strong as the average for New Zealand;
- Significant improvement in employment statistics with more to do;
- Improved productivity (GDP per capita);
- Significant investment in regional projects through Waka Kotahi (NZTA), PGF, and shovel ready projects.

There is still more to do to lift regional prosperity and to contribute to New Zealand Inc. The region is in a strong position to contribute given

our strengths in primary production, food science and technology, and domestic tourism, and investments in infrastructure, distribution and logistics, and skills and talent.

As a region we are connected, organised and have a plan:

- The region's political leaders work closely together to deliver prosperity across the region
- The region has invested in a regional economic action plan and an implementation; programme under the banner of Accelerate25 (A25) and Te Pae Tawhiti;

- Accelerate25 is led by a governance group comprising business, iwi/ Māori, local, regional and central government;

- With the support of Government, A25 has conducted a refresh and identified its priorities, shape and structure for the future;

- Delivery of key projects across the region and sub-regional initiatives are managed and delivered by business, iwi, councils and economic development agencies. The later include the Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA) and Whanganui & Partners.

OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

We have identified key areas that drive regional growth and prosperity (the pillars). These are:

- Sustainable food and fibre production
- Food-tech and agri-tech
- Visitor/tourism
- Māori economy
- Specialised services and manufacturing.

The key supports for these growth areas (the bearers) are:

- Transport and infrastructure
- Education, learning and skills
- Connectivity
- Community infrastructure
- Energy and environmental sustainability.

ACCESSING CENTRAL NEW ZEALAND

Lying at the heart of central New Zealand at the confluence of significant road, rail and air links, the region is uniquely placed to enable the movement of goods, services and people across New Zealand and to export nodes at ports and airports. In short, we are a critical logistics and distribution hub.

Working with Government, the region is generating significant investment into the infrastructure that supports this hub. We have a plan and key priorities. Among critical projects are Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway, the Central New Zealand Distribution Hub (including the Central North Island Freight Hub and Regional Freight Ring Road), Otaki to North of Levin Highway, Te Pūwaha (Whanganui Port) redevelopment, and enhanced passenger train services to Wellington.

Implementation of these projects is important for both the region and New Zealand.

OUR SHARED VISION:

PROSPEROUS, STRONG, VIBRANT REGION FOR OUR PEOPLE, OUR MOKOPUNA, FOR NEW ZEALAND

OUR 4 KEY ROLES IN NZ

- FOOD PRODUCTION, MARKETING, SCIENCE & AGRI TECH POWERHOUSE
- CENTRAL NZ DISTRIBUTION HUB
- DEFENCE CENTRE
- VISITOR DESTINATION

OUR 5 BIG REGIONAL INITIATIVES

- 1 REGIONAL FREIGHT RING ROAD
- 2 CENTRAL NZ FREIGHT HUB
- 3 MARTON RAIL HUB & MANUFACTURING
- 4 FOOD HQ CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT
- 5 WHANGANUI PORT DEVELOPMENT

SUSTAINABLE FOOD, FIBRE & FOREST

- HILL COUNTRY
- HINTERLAND
- PLAINS
- FOOD BOWL
- COASTAL

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT - National & Forest Parks
Tongariro National Park, Whanganui National Park, Pureora Forest Park, Kaimanawa Forest Park, Ruahine Forest Park, Taranaki Forest Park
- OUR 3 MAIN LAKES
Lake Horowhenua, Lake Whirihoa, Lake Moawhanga
- OUR 3 MAIN RIVER CATCHMENTS
Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui), Rangitikei River, Manawatū River

CLIMATE CHANGE

- SEA LEVEL RISE
- HIGH INTENSITY RAINFALL
- DROUGHT

REGIONAL WELL-BEING PARTNERSHIPS

- OUR REVITALISATION AREAS
Raetihi, Castlecliff, Whanganui East, Aramoho, Marton Junction, Highbury, Woodville, Pahiatua, Dannevirke, Shannon, South East Levin
- REFUGEE SETTLEMENT AREAS
Palmerston North, Levin
- PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH
Palmerston North, Whanganui, Taumaranui, Levin

OUR FIRST 10 YEARS OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT

- CBD & CIVIC REDEVELOPMENT**
PN Streets for People Project, CEI Arena Redevelopment, Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment
- SCIENCE & EDUCATION**
Massey University Upgrades, Ngati Apa Tertiary Training Centre
- INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY**
Food HQ Campus Development, Turitea Windfarm, Meridian Central Wind Farm, Puketati Wind Farm
- DEFENCE**
Linton Military Camp & Ohakea Base Regeneration
- TRANSPORT**
Whanganui Port Revitalisation, Ofaki to North Levin (O2NL), Central NZ Freight Hub, Regional Freight Ring Road, Te Ahu a Turanga, Capital Connection (PN - WGTN), Forgotten Highway Project, Accessing Central NZ (Bulls SH1/SH3 & Palmerston North to Levin), SH4 Raetihi Repairs, Route 52 Upgrades, PN - Feilding Shared Path
- HEALTH**
PN Hospital Campus Upgrade
- INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT**
Nature Calls - PN Wastewater Treatment Plant, Foxton Futures, Arawhata Wetland - Lake Horowhenua



OUR 5 MAJOR URBAN GROWTH AREAS

- PALMERSTON NORTH
- WHANGANUI
- LEVIN
- FEILDING
- TAUMARANUI



LEGEND

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MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI REGION

WORKING WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

As a region we are committed to working with Central Government for the benefit of our communities.

The demands on local government to fund and deliver on both community priorities and Central Government priorities are a real point of tension.

Over the term of the new Parliament, local government will be dealing with the three waters reform, housing and infrastructure deficits, freshwater and RMA reform, urban development policy, and the challenges of planning for and managing growth. In our view, making the most of the opportunities and challenges ahead requires a strong partnership with Wellington.

Kei aku rangatira, tēnā, kua timu te tai o kōrero
engari ka rere tonu ngā mihi a ngā rohe, me ngā
kupu rāhiri a ngā koromatua ki a koutou, tēnā
koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

To the chiefly ones, the tide of words has receded but our greetings and acknowledgements still flow from the region/districts; and the respectful words of the mayors and chair to you all, greetings, greetings, greetings one and all.