



**Tō Tātou Tāone 2055 – Our City 2055**

**Tangata Moana Fono**

**Summary**



# Contents

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Major Themes ..... 4

    Tangata Moana Mana and Visibility ..... 4

    Tangata Moana Eco-systems and Connections ..... 6

    A Growing City ..... 7

    Economy and Jobs ..... 8

    Education, Health and Housing ..... 9

    Environment and Climate Change ..... 10

Next Steps ..... 11

At a hui on 31 March 2025, we asked members of our Pasifika community to share their thoughts on what they love about living in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, future challenges and opportunities for the city, and what we want to leave for future generations.

This report summarises feedback from the Tangata Moana Fono, which included the following key reflections:

- **Tangata Moana Mana and Visibility**  
There is a strong call to uplift Pacific culture, leadership and presence across Lower Hutt's public life and places.
- **Tangata Moana Eco-systems and Connections**  
People feel deep pride and belonging in Lower Hutt but want to ensure stronger inclusion today and for future generations.
- **A Growing City**  
While the city's location and amenities are valued, growth brings concerns about infrastructure, green space and community cohesion.
- **Economy and Jobs**  
The community envisions a thriving economy that supports Pacific peoples, innovation, collective assets, sustainability and job creation.
- **Education, Health, and Housing**  
Improving access to quality education, equitable healthcare, and culturally appropriate housing is essential for future wellbeing.
- **Environment and Climate Change**  
Protecting Lower Hutt's natural environment and preparing for climate change impacts are key concerns.

The valuable views of our residents inform the development of a city strategy: **Tō Tātou Tāone 2055 – Our City 2055**, a document that will set goals and identify plans to guide our city into the future.

# Major Themes

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## Tangata Moana Mana and Visibility

There was a clear call to elevate Pacific presence and leadership throughout Lower Hutt.

Since the 1960s, Pacific communities – including Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan, Cook Islanders, Fijian and Niuean peoples – have made significant contributions to the city, settling in suburbs such as Taita, Naenae, Petone, Moera, Wainuiomata, Silverstream and Eastbourne. Today, over 13,000 Pacific peoples call Lower Hutt home.

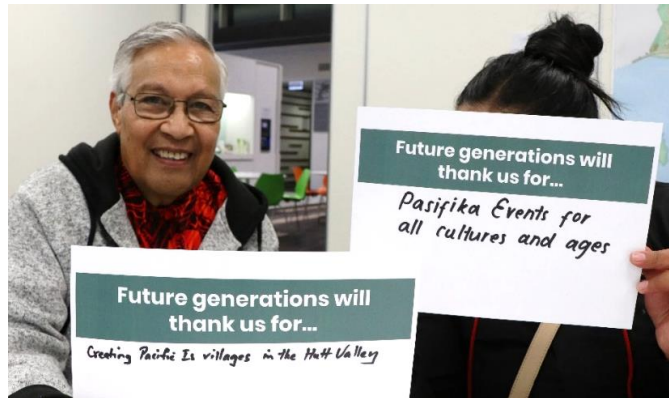


Despite this long-standing presence, concerns were raised about the limited visibility of Pacific heritage and culture, and the potential loss of historic places and traditional knowledge.

There was a desire for greater visibility of the Pacific contribution to the city over many decades, including in education, sports, health, music, business, women's leadership and other areas. The city's Pacific history, legacy leaders and success stories should be widely known and celebrated.

Recognising the contribution of Pacific collective assets to the city was also a priority. This included venues (e.g. Te Umiumiga a Tokelau Hutt Valley in Naenae) and churches/halls (e.g. St David's Multicultural Church in Petone), which were funded and built by the community or congregation. *"These legacy assets are not just buildings – they represent the evidence of our community's determination and investment in our people AND Hutt City."*

Many expressed a desire for greater Pacific leadership, including representation on the City Leadership Group and hope of a future *"Pacific Mayor."* People noted the practise of intentional inclusion for Tangata Moana brings opportunity, equity and value to key matters of interest for Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt.



There was a call to support key Pacific regional events (such as participation in Samoa mo Samoa Rugby League Festival, Huttfest or Filimalae Kirikiti Tournament), or hosting international gatherings (i.e. Tokelau Easter Festival or Te Maeva Nui Festival) which could include financial contributions, staff resource time, subsidised or free venue access (noting that Pacific Te Awa Kairangi groups had a well-established and credible reputation with these events).

The community envisaged embedding Pacific peoples long-standing history, language and culture, and economic contribution into the fabric of the city, for current and future generations.

### **Ideas for the Future:**

- A Pacific cultural heritage arts centre
- A Pacific food or night market
- A sister city relationship with countries in the Pacific
- Development of Pacific Island villages in the Hutt Valley
- Greater use of Pacific names for city streets, parks, and public spaces
- Improved access to sports grounds for Pacific traditional games and festivals
- Increased visibility of Pacific arts, including space at The Dowse



# Tangata Moana Eco-systems and Connections

With 16 Pacific ethnicities in Lower Hutt representing a collective of churches, trusts and organisations, businesses, sporting clubs and school collectives, Tangata Moana in Te Awa Kairangi are diverse and deeply connected.

People expressed a strong sense of pride, belonging, and identity in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, with deep intergenerational ties to the city. This was a place where families had raised children and laid loved ones to rest:

*"Feels like home"*

*"Holds family memories"*

*"My wife's home town! Now the children. Turangawaewae."*

Lower Hutt was often described as a friendly city, embracing many ethnic groups with *"distinct identities but still connected"*.

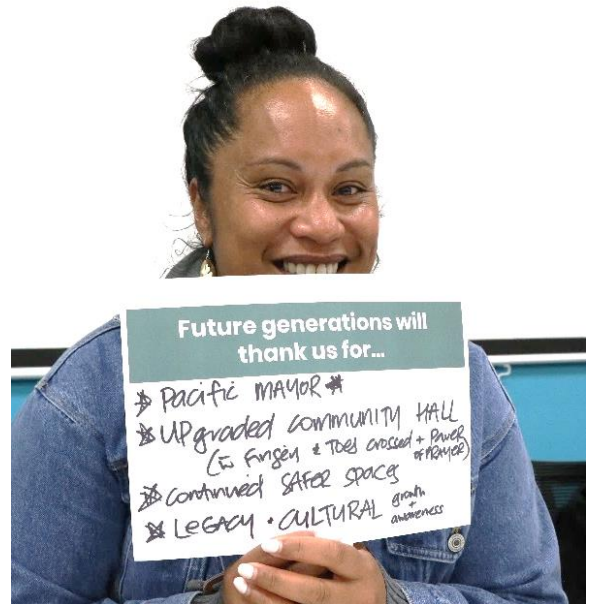
However, there were also calls for the city to show greater inclusion of Pacific voices, *"...the city needs to show greater inclusion of us."*

It was important that all generations and the Pacific disabled and neurodiverse community felt a sense of belonging as part of the Tangata Moana eco-system and Lower Hutt society: *"Pasifika events for all cultures and ages."*

Venues and events should future-proof accessibility and be appropriate to different needs. The cost of venues for large community gatherings was an issue, and there was a hope for improved affordability and access to venues and facilities for Pacific events.

There were concerns about losing strong community bonds as the population changes and grows. People hoped to avoid a future where residents feel:

*"Disconnected to the area and each other – meaning young people leave/move abroad."*



## A Growing City

Tangata Moana arts, culture, language and knowledge is a taonga, which people felt should be infused across a growing city in health, education and wellbeing as an integral and holistic part of lives, identity, culture and community.

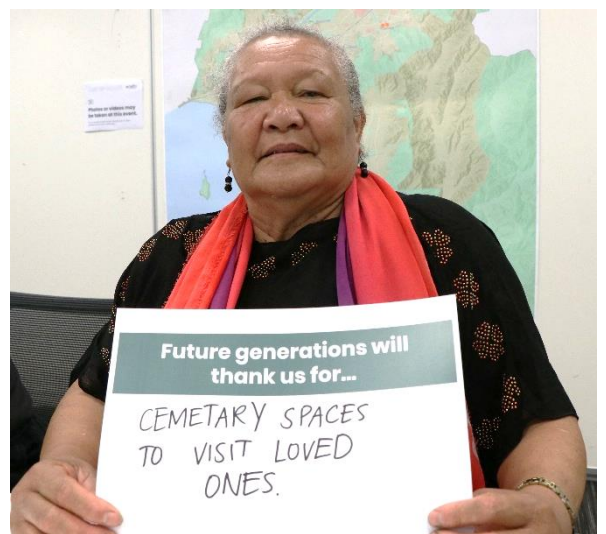
Lower Hutt's strategic location—close to Wellington and Upper Hutt—was highly valued. People appreciated the city's accessibility to shops, schools, hospitals, entertainment, and recreational amenities. Treasured places included Waiwhetū Marae, second-hand shops, libraries, community hubs, and spaces for children to play.

*"Public transport A++"*

*"Easily accessible to everything"*

With a growing population, there were concerns about increasing housing demand, land shortages and *"intensive housing but not enough green parks."*

Sufficient land/space for urupa – cemeteries was also important, so that people could visit loved ones who had passed.



An ageing population highlighted the need for accessible, elder-friendly spaces. Including more benches or seats in public spaces where elders could rest when shopping or out for a walk.

Many questioned whether current infrastructure could keep up with the city's pace of growth:

*"Upkeep of transport lines and connectivity"*

*"Roothing infrastructure"*

*"Water leaks sorted!"*

*"Sewerage being sorted!"*

Other practical ideas included:

*"Free travel for school kids."*

## Economy and Jobs

A key aspiration was to create more opportunities for Pacific peoples to thrive, with a focus on job creation, better living conditions, and economic inclusion:

*"City vision to impact job prospects in the future"*

*"More jobs. Better living conditions."*

At the same time, there were concerns about job cuts, cost of living, and the need to support flexible work options.

Residents acknowledged the shifting economy, noting the importance of embracing the digital age and technological innovation:

*"Embrace digital age"*

*"Technology – AI"*

*"Smart city transition"*

Lower Hutt was seen as a place with potential to become a hub for entrepreneurship and innovation:

*"Base for start-up companies"*

*"Hutt Valley for start-ups"*

Creative suggestions included:

*"Gondola – more jobs", "Luge"*

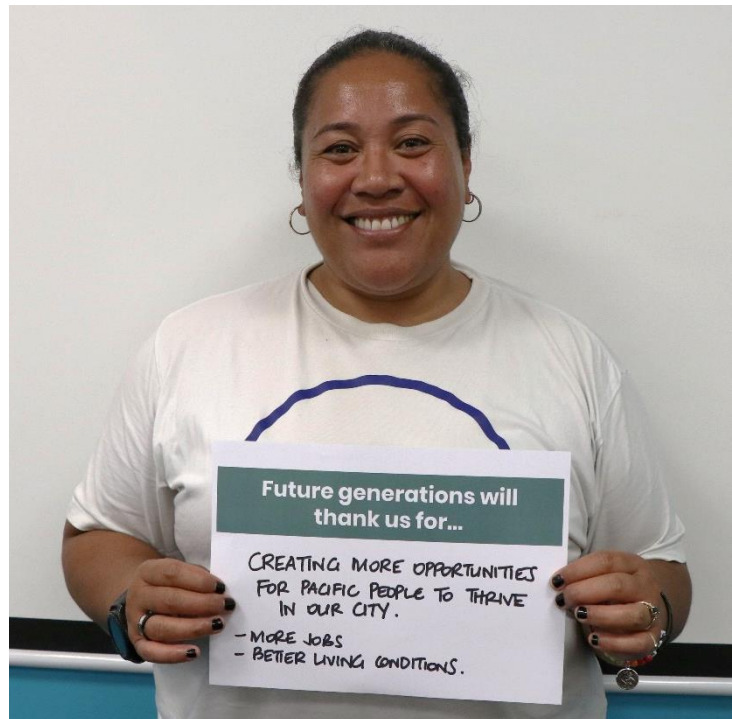
*"Pasifika Park"*

Local initiatives in sustainable energy and waste management were also mentioned:

*"Modern, sustainable energy systems being made here"*

*"Sustainable energy powered city"*

*"Waste and energy solutions – making these alternatives more accessible."*



## Education, Health and Housing

People emphasised that Tangata Moana were an asset for Lower Hutt, bringing cultural, social and economic value to the city and region. Pacific communities must be included and valued as equal partners in city matters.

The community expressed a desire to *“create better opportunities for our future generations,”* with an emphasis on supporting thriving youth and children.

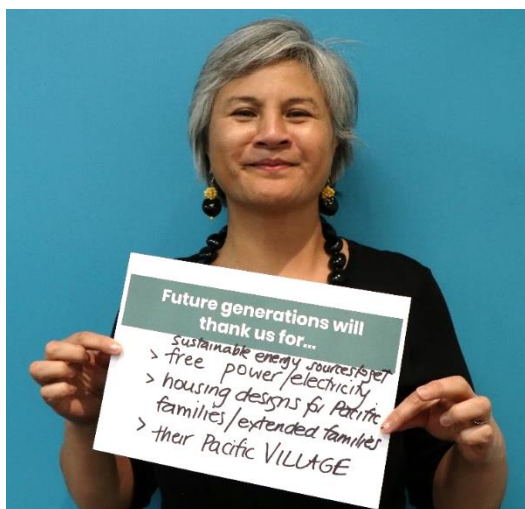
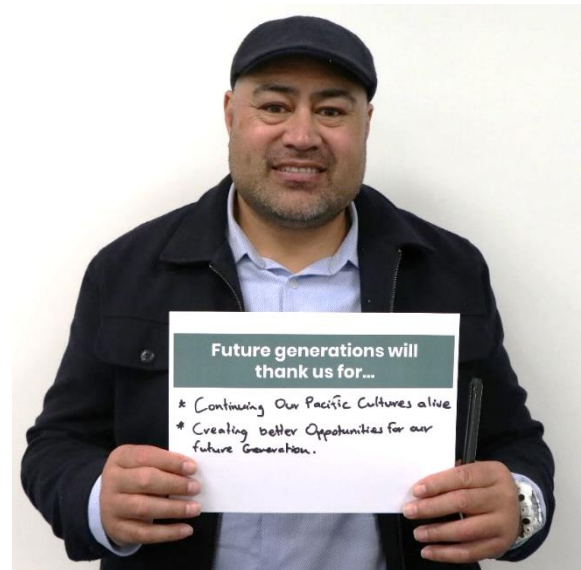
City strengths included strong educational options, and recreational spaces for children.

However, there were concerns about barriers to education and a lack of schooling to meet future demand:

*“Schooling – not enough to service Hutt.”*

While the proximity to the hospital was appreciated, many hoped for more equitable healthcare for Pacific people and better access to health services.

There were significant concerns about the high cost of living, with calls for *“low-cost housing rentals”* and increased investment in housing. Living costs could be reduced through: *“low-cost food supplies,” “Free power/electricity,”* and *“Sharing of resources.”*



The importance of culturally appropriate housing was mentioned by several people:

*“Housing designs for Pacific families/extended families,”*

*“Spaces for traditional Pacific living – communal.”*

People noted that new homes often had too few bedrooms, limiting options for intergenerational living.

## Environment and Climate Change

The city's natural beauty – river, ocean, hills, beaches and green spaces – was deeply appreciated. People spoke about the city's distinct geography with the flat river plain, river winding through to the ocean and hills on either side.

*"Love the landscape! It's beautiful – the ocean, the mountains etc."*

*"Walking tracks. Love the scenery."*

There was gratitude for the *"best of both worlds – close to city, suburbs, rural areas"*, with Lower Hutt containing both urban and rural areas.

Climate change was seen as a major threat, particularly in relation to sea-level rise and flooding:

*"Sea-level rise – Petone"*

*"Climate change – impact on environment"*

*"Flooding– prone zones"*

Concerns were also raised about the city's disaster preparedness for Tangata Moana families, churches, businesses and community organisations:

*"Improve disaster plan"*

*"Earthquake and disaster preparedness"*

Water quality and pollution were also identified as pressing environmental issues.



# Next Steps

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Community feedback tells us that the people of Lower Hutt are passionate, forward-thinking, and deeply committed to making our city a better place.

By working together and staying focused on our shared values, we can create a city that future generations will be proud of.

Now it's time to use these insights and turn them into action! We've established a City Leadership Group who are driving the creation and delivery of city strategy outcomes and will champion a case for change for Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt.

We will test key priorities with members of the community, and invite public feedback on the draft document, before finalising the City Strategy for endorsement later in 2025.

If you, your business, or organisation are interested in being involved in supporting the development of the Lower Hutt City Strategy, please let us know by emailing [haveyoursay@huttcity.govt.nz](mailto:haveyoursay@huttcity.govt.nz) or register on the website: <https://www.huttcity.govt.nz/city-strategy>