



[Welcoming Communities New Zealand Programme – Key Messages Updated](#)

Welcoming Communities – background information

About Welcoming Communities

Welcoming Communities – Te Waharoa ki ngā Hapori is a settlement programme that supports local government councils (councils) and their communities to create welcoming and inclusive environments for newcomers – recent migrants, former refugees and international students. It involves local residents in developing, delivering and participating in welcoming activities. This approach creates communities where everyone can belong, participate, contribute and thrive. It helps increase social engagement, build social connections and grow social inclusion. This generates economic, social, civic and cultural benefits for the community.

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is leading the programme's implementation with the Office of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. They are currently working with ten councils in the following five regions:

- Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty (Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council)
- Palmerston North (Palmerston North City Council)
- Whanganui (Whanganui District Council)
- Canterbury (represented by Ashburton and Selwyn District Councils)
- Southland (Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council and Environment Southland – coordinated by Great South).

The programme was successfully trialled as a small-scale pilot from July 2017 to June 2019. Early outcomes from the programme's independent interim evaluation report show that:

- stronger links are forming within the communities participating in the programme
- councils are taking a more visible leadership role in promoting diversity and inclusion
- there has been an explicit shift to locals taking a 'welcoming' role, and
- there is a positive change in community awareness of diversity and inclusion.

Welcoming Communities supports the inclusion outcome area of the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy and the participation outcome area of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy.

Welcoming Communities is part of a broader international welcoming network which includes more than 250 local councils or municipalities around the world. INZ works closely with others in the

global welcoming network, including [Welcoming International](#), [Welcoming Cities](#) (an initiative of Welcoming Australia) and [Welcoming America](#).

The programme's implementation generates social, economic, civic and cultural benefits for the community and New Zealand as a whole. It does this by:

- supporting communities to become even more welcoming to newcomers building a competitive advantage to attract, support and retain newcomers
- recognising that welcoming and inclusive activities increase social engagement, build social connections and grow social inclusion
- proactively fostering an environment where everyone can belong, participate, contribute and thrive
- building community resilience to respond to significant events such as natural disasters
- enhancing trust so that newcomers feel confident to raise unfair or biased behaviour, pressure or exploitation.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) provided seed funding of \$50,000 per year over the two year pilot to each of the five delivery sites. This funding has been used by the councils to employ Welcoming Communities coordinators in each region. They will receive a third and final year of seed funding for 2019/20.

View a short video about Welcoming Communities [here](#) and the programme's rationale [here](#).

Welcoming Communities Standard and accreditation

At the heart of the Welcoming Communities programme is the outcomes-based [Welcoming Communities Standard \(the Standard\)](#).

The Standard's elements are:

1. Inclusive Leadership
2. Welcoming Communications
3. Equitable Access
4. Connected and Inclusive Communities
5. Economic Development, Business and Employment
6. Civic Engagement and Participation
7. Welcoming Public Spaces
8. Culture and Identity

Across these eight elements, the Standard provides councils and communities with a benchmark for what a successful welcoming and inclusive community looks like. Each council has developed its own Welcoming Plan of activities and initiatives to achieve the Standard's outcomes and work towards accreditation as a 'Welcoming Community'. INZ is working with the councils to develop an accreditation process so that the councils can apply to become accredited as a 'Welcoming Community'.

You can read more about the Welcoming Plans process on the [Immigration New Zealand website](#).

The Standard's principles acknowledge the important role of tangata whenua as respected leaders and key collaborators in the development and delivery of the programme. Two key Māori cultural values underpin the programme. They are Whanaungatanga, the importance of relationships, and Manaakitanga, the value of extending hospitality and caring for other people.

Programme Expansion – Key Messages for September 2019

What's happening – key messages

- Cabinet has approved a post-pilot expansion of the programme.
- Additional funding will come from the Immigration Levy
 - \$6.67 million over 2019/20-2022/23 plus \$0.5M in out years
 - This will support expansion and on-going implementation of the programme.
- The programme will be expanded to 30 more sites around the country. They will receive grant funding of \$50,000 per annum for three years.
- The programme's long term objectives are in line with other cross-government strategies that focus on promoting community engagement and improving social inclusion.

Pilot evaluation – key messages

- An independent interim evaluation report completed in September 2018 found:
 - stronger links are forming within the communities participating in the programme
 - councils are taking a more visible leadership role in promoting diversity and inclusion
 - there has been an explicit shift to locals taking a 'welcoming' role
 - there is a positive change in community awareness of diversity and inclusion.
- A final evaluation report will be completed in November 2019. MBIE will continue to monitor and evaluate the success of the programme. Findings will be used to improve to the programme over time.

Expansion – key messages

- The programme will expand over the next four years. Funding is from the Immigration Levy. \$6.65 million plus \$0.5M in out years.
- Expansion will:
 - maintain momentum from the pilot and build on progress towards better long-term social, economic, cultural and civic outcomes (ie make communities more welcoming, resilient and inclusive)
 - support wider government work on social inclusion
 - capture value and return on the investment already made in the pilot programme
 - encourage new councils and their communities to join the Welcoming Communities network and access its benefits.
- Once the new sites are on board, and have received the three years' of financial support for the programme, MBIE will continue to provide non-financial support. This includes:
 - support, guidance and advice
 - access to accreditation and its associated benefits
 - access to national workshops
 - information on settlement and community development best practice
 - [resources](#) to assist with on-the-ground delivery.

What's next – key messages

- INZ will:
 - develop the selection criteria for new councils, along with an expression of interest form and process
 - in November 2019, after the local government elections, invite councils to submit an expression of interest form to join the programme
 - visit interested councils (or groups of councils) to discuss the programme
 - prepare new resources to support councils coming on board, while also staying involved with existing councils as they implement their Welcoming Plans
 - present on the programme at the Local Government Conference in 2020.

Welcoming Communities Expansion: Questions and Answers

Question: What is 'Welcoming Communities'?

Welcoming Communities is a settlement programme that supports local councils and their communities to create welcoming and inclusive environments for newcomers – recent migrants, former refugees and international students. It involves local residents in developing, delivering and participating in welcoming activities.

Question: Why is it needed?

It creates communities where everyone can belong, participate, contribute and thrive. It helps increase social engagement, build social connections and grow social inclusion. It generates economic, social, civic and cultural benefits for the community. The programme's long term objectives are in line with other cross-government strategies that focus on promoting community engagement and improving social inclusion

Question: What is involved in 'Welcoming Communities'?

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) leads the programme's implementation with the Office of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. They are currently working with ten councils in the following five regions:

- Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty (Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council)
- Palmerston North (Palmerston North City Council)
- Whanganui (Whanganui District Council)
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The expansion will see the initiative expanded beyond the pilot to other regions around the country. The aim is to see it rolled out in another 30 sites.

Question: What's been decided/what will happen as a result of this announcement?

Cabinet has approved a post-pilot expansion of the programme. It'll see the initiative expanded to 30 more sites around the country. Those that sign up to it will receive grant funding of \$50,000 per annum for three years.

In total, \$6.67 million will be spent on the expansion from 2019/20 to 2022/23, plus \$0.5M in out years. The additional funding will come from the Immigration Levy.

Question: Why is it being expanded?

The expansion follows an evaluation of the pilot. That evaluation has found that:

- stronger links are forming within the communities participating in the programme
- councils are taking a more visible leadership role in promoting diversity and inclusion
- there has been an explicit shift to locals taking a 'welcoming' role
- there is a positive change in community awareness of diversity and inclusion.

These findings mean there is significant value in extending the Welcoming Communities programme to the rest of the country. Expanding it will build on progress towards making our communities more welcoming, resilient and inclusive. It also supports wider government work currently underway on social inclusion.

Question: What happens next?

INZ is to develop selection criteria and an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for new councils and communities that want to join the programme. After local government elections conclude later this year, INZ will invite councils to submit an EOI to join the Welcoming Communities programme. It will also visit interested councils to discuss Welcoming Communities and what it involves.

INZ is preparing new resources to support councils coming on board, while also staying involved with existing councils as they implement their Welcoming Plans. It will also do a presentation, explaining Welcoming Communities, at the 2020 Local Government Conference.