



Expanded Welcoming Communities Evaluation

Interim Report

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Abbreviation	Definition
Advisory Group	Some WCPs use the term 'Advisory Panel', but for consistence, this report uses 'Advisory Group' throughout.
Coordinators	Welcoming Communities Programme Coordinators, who are employed by councils.
Council	'Council' is used for all quotations from people employed by or elected to the council, including Mayors, councillors, WCP Coordinators, and other council staff. This supports anonymity.
INZ	Immigration New Zealand
WCP	Welcoming Communities Programme
WC Plan	Welcoming Plan
WC Standard	Welcoming Communities Standard

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Welcoming Communities/Te Waharoa ki ngā Hapori¹ (WCP) is led by Immigration New Zealand (INZ) in collaboration with the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. The WCP brings together local government (councils) and communities to make places more welcoming for everyone: the receiving community and newcomers (former refugees, international students, and migrants). Following a successful pilot, between July 2017 and June 2019, the programme has been expanded. MBIE has commissioned Allen and Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists (*Allen + Clarke*) to evaluate the programme expansion. The purpose of the evaluation is:

to evaluate the degree to which the expanded programme delivers anticipated short to longer-term outcomes and desired impacts as set out in the Welcoming Communities Intervention Logic. Findings from this evaluation will be used to inform Ministers about the ongoing programme and to inform the ongoing operation and delivery of the programme to ensure its continued success and to maximise its impact (extract from the Consultancy Services Order).

The evaluation is being conducted over four years, including three data collection cycles. Five evaluation criterion and 12 associated questions² were developed through a codesign workshop with MBIE and INZ officers, the independent evaluation team from *Allen + Clarke*, and a WCP coordinator.

This Interim Findings Report is the main output from Data Collection Cycle 1.

Methods

Data Collection Cycle 1 included focus groups with council coordinators of the WCP; interviews with national stakeholders, council-based case studies, a survey, and data monitoring.

Findings

For each of the eight evaluative KEQs an interim evaluative finding³ was reached and is provided below. For the four descriptive questions, a summary is provided.

¹ Translates as “The Gateway to Communities”

² Of the 12 questions, eight are evaluative questions and four are descriptive.

³ Interim evaluation findings are based on data collection cycle 1, and will be further tested through data collection cycles 2 and 3.



Criterion 1: Effectiveness of Programme Implementation and Expansion

KEQ1.1: How effectively is the programme being implemented?

Interim Finding: The programme has been effectively implemented, but the core implementation documents and processes could be improved.

KEQ1.2: How effectively is the expanded programme being rolled out?

Interim Finding: The expanded roll-out is being delivered effectively, relative to the stage of implementation.

Criterion 2: Adaptation and Innovation

KEQ2.1: How well has the programme been adapted to the needs and context of the communities it is delivered in?

Interim Finding: WCPs are effectively adapted to meet the needs of their local communities.

KEQ2.2: To what extent is innovative practice part of the programme implementation?

Interim Finding: Innovative practice is supported as part of programme implementation.

Criterion 3: Reach

KEQ3.1: To what extent is the programme reaching its intended participants/target groups?

Interim Finding: The WCP is reaching members of its target groups, but there may be 'hidden' pockets of newcomers who are missing out; and there is more work to be done reaching the receiving community.

Criterion 4: Outcomes

KEQ4.1: To what extent have the overarching outcomes described in the Welcoming Communities Standard been achieved?

Interim Finding: There has been progress in achieving these outcomes, with the extent of progress being aligned to the maturity of the programme (by council).

KEQ4.2: To what extent have the expected short- and medium-term outcomes of the Welcoming Communities Intervention Logic been achieved?

Interim Finding: Progress towards enablers and short- and medium-term intended outcomes is commensurate with the length of time the WCP has been implemented, with all case studies describing progress toward at least some intended outcomes.

KEQ4.3: For whom, and to what extent, and in what circumstances have these outcomes been achieved?



Interim Finding: Progress toward outcomes requires effective sustained implementation, and a skilled WCP Coordinator who has sufficient capacity for the work.

KEQ4.4: What unanticipated outcomes has the programme contributed to?

In well-established WCPs, relationships built through the WCP, and especially via the Coordinator and Advisory Group members, were leveraged during COVID restrictions. This was particularly so during lockdowns and then to establish culturally safe vaccination clinics. There have been other situations, such as fatal accidents among newcomer community members, where the relationships established through the WCP enabled a rapid response that aimed to prevent a recurrence.

Criterion 5: Learning and Improvement

KEQ5.1: What are the barriers and enablers to successful programme delivery from Immigration New Zealand and the councils new to the programme and the longer-standing councils involved in the pilot?

Some important barriers have been identified:

- Major programme tools, including the *WC Standard*, *Putting out the Welcoming Mat* and templates used to assist with onboarding new councils, are an implementation barrier because they are not optimally aligned to the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Some councils may be creating a barrier to successful delivery of the WCP by allocating insufficient hours to WCP coordination and/or by delaying integration of the WCP with their strategic plans.
- There are barriers to engagement with mana whenua, with the evaluation finding that case studied WCPs did not appear to have partnered with mana whenua to the extent described in the *WC Standard*.
- There are barriers to engagement with the business sector, with the case studied WCPs not appearing to have created enduring relationships of a nature described in the *Welcoming Standard*.
- The receiving community does not seem to be as engaged with the WCP as is intended by the *WC Standard*. This is a barrier to achieving intended outcomes of the programme, such as for element four, *Connected and Inclusive Communities*.
- It has become apparent to council interviewees that the process of developing a Welcoming Plan for a region with the large geographical spread is challenging and may be a barrier to successful implementation.

Some important enablers have been identified:



- Employing a WCP Coordinator with the right skills mix is an important enabler of the WCP. Coupled with this, the WCP is enabled by the Coordinator being sufficiently resourced and having sufficient time allocated to do the job well.
- Programme reach is considerably enabled by the composition and collaborative nature of the Advisory Group. The inclusion of a local INZ Relationship Manager at Advisory Group level has been identified as an enabler of successful delivery of the WCP.
- The support provided by INZ officers to WCP Coordinators, especially in the programme establishment period, is greatly valued and enables WCPs to get set up on a solid footing.
- Having the WCP being driven by a central government agency but delivered by a local government agency was considered an enabler.

Further, the WCP is generally endorsed as a valuable initiative, which has core strengths of commitment, enthusiasm, and collaboration.

KEQ5.2: What changes could be made to enhance the effectiveness of the programme?

The number of changes were suggested for the programme, and the main ones have resulted in recommendations, which are covered below.

KEQ5.3: What supports the sustainability of the programme?

The sustainability of the WCP at the council level appears to be supported by the extent to which it is embedded into the strategy and plans of its host council.

Council decisions around the funding of the WCP, including the hours allocated to the Coordinator for their WCP work, are important to WCP sustainability.

Employing a WCP Coordinator with the right skills mix supports WCP sustainability.

Being able to demonstrate the positive effects from the WCP to councils and to Government will support its sustainability.

Recommendations

The evaluators have collaborated with MBIE and INZ to develop the following seven recommendations:

1. Māori engagement

WE RECOMMEND that MBIE/INZ work alongside councils and Māori, creating reciprocal relationships and genuine partnership, to contribute to building Welcoming Communities.

2. Receiving Communities

WE RECOMMEND that the Welcoming Communities Programme continue to identify opportunities to engage with receiving communities.

3. Business Sector

WE RECOMMEND that councils identify opportunities to engage with the business sector, to promote the contribution that newcomers make to the region's economy.

4. Council Capacity

WE RECOMMEND that MBIE/INZ continue to ensure councils have realistic expectations about the effort and resource inputs required from the onset of the Programme in order to implement, sustain, and maximise the benefits of WCP.

5. Welcoming Standard

WE RECOMMEND that the *Welcoming Standard* outcomes be reviewed to ensure they meet the current needs and aspirations of councils and the community. It is important that the outcomes are guided by Te Tiriti principles and worded in plain English.

6. Welcoming Mat

WE RECOMMEND that the *Putting out the Welcoming Mat* be reviewed and revised to reflect the way the programme is implemented in Aotearoa New Zealand, with current, relevant examples and case studies.

7. Accreditation

WE RECOMMEND that the process of gaining Accreditation be simplified, recognising that the effort required by the Coordinator to prepare the application is effort that is not available for the actual mahi of the programme.



1.0 BACKGROUND

About the Welcoming Communities Programme/Te Waharoa ki ngā Hapori

The Welcoming Communities Programme - Te Waharoa ki ngā Hapori⁴ (WCP) is led by Immigration New Zealand (INZ) in collaboration with the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and the Human Rights Commission. The WCP brings together local government councils (councils) and their communities to make it more welcoming and inclusive for newcomers (recent migrants, former refugees and international students) and local residents so they can participate fully in the social, civic, cultural and economic life of the community.

The WCP was piloted in Aotearoa New Zealand from July 2017 to June 2019 with ten councils⁵ across five regions. Based on positive evaluation findings and the success of the pilot programme, in August 2019 Cabinet agreed to allocate \$6.665m Immigration Levy revenue over four years (2020/21 to 2023/24) to expand the programme to up to an additional 30 sites. Since the expansion, 17 new councils joined the programme. By July 2022, 26 councils (including those from the pilot) were taking part in the WCP across 12 regions (in different stages of implementation).

The role of Immigration New Zealand

The programme is overseen by Immigration New Zealand (INZ), an agency within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

INZ's role includes:

- supporting and guiding new and longer-standing member councils
- supporting the expansion of the programme through on-boarding new member councils and managing increasing number of members
- promoting the programme
- providing resources, workshops, information on national and international best practice and opportunities for members to network and learn from each other.

The role of the Coordinator

The Welcoming Communities coordinator leads the Welcoming Communities programme within their council. They are INZ's main point of contact within the council, managing all requirements for participation in the WCP including reporting, applying for accreditation and

⁴ Translates as "The Gateway to Communities"

⁵ Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council; Palmerston North City Council; Whanganui District Council; Ashburton District Council; Selwyn District Council; Gore District Council; Invercargill City Council; Southland District Council; Environment Southland



contributing to the network. They are responsible for guiding the council and the community to become a Welcoming Community.⁶

The role of the Advisory Group

The Advisory Group provides guidance and expertise, ensuring diverse perspectives are reflected, supporting and representing the interest of the programme, and both socialising the programme and 'doing the doing'.⁷ The Advisory Group are representative of the community and members are expected to draw on their networks and relationships to drive the programme forward.

INZ support for the WCP Coordinators

Prior to 2022, the INZ-Welcoming Communities team organised monthly coordinators' virtual meetings. During the meetings, coordinators took turns providing updates about their work and the Welcoming Communities programme in their region.

From the beginning of 2022, the coordinators monthly meetings became knowledge sharing sessions. Each meeting, one or two coordinators virtually presented on a specific topic, for example, how to develop a welcoming plan, how to conduct a stocktake, accreditation...etc. Also, several guests were invited to these meetings to share their knowledge and experience with the coordinators, such as members of the Welcoming International Alliance: Christina Pope, Senior Director of Welcoming International and Jacqueline Broadhead, Director, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) University of Oxford as well as INZ staff members.

Since October 2022, in addition to the virtual knowledge sharing session, the INZ-Welcoming Communities team have organised regular virtual meetings for coordinators according to their stage in the Welcoming Communities programme. New coordinators meet fortnightly, Stage 1 coordinators meet monthly, and Stage 2 meet bi-monthly. The coordinators take turns chairing the meetings and focus on topics that are of interest.

There is also an annual in-person Welcoming Communities Coordinators' Hui. The most recent one was held on the 24 and 25 of November 2022. The 2020 and 2021 Hui were cancelled due to COVID.

In addition, the INZ-Welcoming Communities team organise trainings and workshops for Welcoming Communities coordinators.

About this Evaluation Report

MBIE has commissioned *Allen + Clarke* to conduct a four-year evaluation that assesses the degree to which the expanded programme delivers the anticipated short- to longer-term

⁶ Taken from the *Welcoming Communities Coordinators Toolkit*.

⁷ *Welcoming Communities Coordinators Toolkit*.



outcomes and desired impacts described in the Welcoming Communities Standard (WC Standard) and the Intervention Logic (IL).

This interim report has been developed following the first of three data collection cycles in the evaluation of the Expanded Welcoming Communities programme. Data Collection Cycle 1 was carried out between March and July 2022.

Data Collection Cycle 1 was somewhat impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, but five case studies (the main data collection activity) proceeded in-person, without interruption by restrictions.

The case studies have provided in-depth information which forms the basis of much of the findings. The data gathered through national stakeholder interviews, Coordinator focus groups, and the survey supported the experiences described by case study participants, strengthening the validity of the findings. Further, the survey provided some valuable insights that had not emerged through the case studies, particularly in relation to iwi participation.

Data collection was largely carried out by four team members, with two further team members in support roles. The three team members with the greatest involvement in data collection did the analysis and report drafting, supported by their colleagues.



2.0 METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of the Expanded Welcoming Communities Programme Evaluation is:

To evaluate the degree to which the expanded programme delivers anticipated short to longer-term outcomes and desired impacts as set out in the Welcoming Communities Intervention Logic. Findings from this evaluation will be used to inform Ministers about the ongoing programme and to inform the ongoing operation and delivery of the programme to ensure its continued success and to maximise its impact. (Extract from the Consultancy Services Order.)

The evaluation is being carried out in three cycles, with the present report being an output of the first cycle. Data Collection Cycle 1 was carried out during 2022. The second data collection cycle is planned for 2023 and the third is planned for 2024.

Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions

Through a collaborative design workshop, five evaluation criteria with 12 associated key evaluation questions (KEQs) were established, as depicted in the following table.

Table 1: Criterion and Key Evaluation Questions

Criterion	Key evaluation questions
Effectiveness of programme implementation and expansion	1.1 How effectively is the programme being implemented?
	1.2 How effectively is the expanded programme being rolled out?
Adaptation and innovation	2.1 How well has the programme been adapted to the needs and context of the communities it is delivered in?
	2.2 To what extent is innovative practice part of the programme implementation?
Reach	3.1 To what extent is the programme reaching its intended participants/target groups?
Outcomes	4.1 To what extent have the overarching outcomes described in the Welcoming Communities Standard been achieved?
	4.2 To what extent have the expected short- and medium-term outcomes of the Welcoming Communities Intervention Logic been achieved?
	4.3 For whom, and to what extent, and in what circumstances have these outcomes been achieved?



Criterion	Key evaluation questions
	4.4 What unanticipated outcomes has the programme contributed to?
Learning and improving	5.1. What are the barriers and enablers to successful programme delivery from Immigration New Zealand and the councils new to the programme and the longer-standing councils involved in the pilot?
	5.2 What changes could be made to enhance the effectiveness of the programme?
	5.3 What supports the sustainability of the programme?

Data Collection

The data collection methods for Cycle 1 were:

- Two focus groups with WCP Coordinators
- Ten interviews with National Stakeholders
- Five case studies
- Survey (of councils not covered by case studies)
- Data monitoring.

Data collection tools for Cycle 1 were designed by the evaluation team and reviewed by MBIE.

This section describes the methods used for Data Collection Cycle 1 and how these were operationalised.

WCP Coordinator Focus Groups

The focus groups were held in March 2022. Coordinators from 13 of the 17 member councils (at that time) attended one of two 90-minute focus groups. Participating councils were:

- Ashburton District Council (pilot)
- Central Otago District Council
- Gore District Council (pilot – in collaboration with Invercargill City Council and Southland District Council)
- Hamilton City Council
- Horowhenua District Council
- Masterton District Council
- Palmerston North City Council (pilot)
- Queenstown Lakes District Council



- Rangitikei District Council
- Selwyn District Council (pilot)
- Southland District Council (pilot – in collaboration with Invercargill City Council and Gore District Council)
- Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tauranga City Council (pilot - this is a single programme)
- Whanganui District Council (pilot)

COVID-19 restrictions during this time meant that the two focus groups were held via Zoom conferencing for this data collection cycle. The focus group guide for Cycle 1 addressed the support received and desired from INZ; Learning and Improvement; and the enablers of outcomes described in the Intervention Logic. Other topics will be addressed through further focus groups planned for Cycles 2 and 3, as per the following table.

Table 2: Topics to be covered in the focus groups, by evaluation cycle

Cycle	Immigration New Zealand	Stakeholder Engagement	Learning and Improving	Outcomes
1	✓	✗	✓	Enablers
2	✗	✓	✓	Short-term
3	✓	✓	✗	Medium-term

The focus groups were hampered by participants having different versions of Zoom, resulting in some people having no access to functionality built into more recent versions. Some participants attended in pairs or small groups rather than individually joining the session, which further hampered participation in some activities such as polls. Despite these limitations, one participant who also took part in a case study reported that the focus group had been very useful for making connections with other Coordinators and hearing directly from them about things that were working well and things that were not working as well as expected.

National Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were held with 10 national stakeholders, some individually and some in pairs. National stakeholder interviews included personnel from INZ, MBIE, and the Human Rights Commission. Interviewees were nominated by INZ and selected due to their national role in relation to the WCP. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, these interviews were all conducted online via Zoom.

National stakeholders were interviewed in relation to the following evaluation criteria:

- Effectiveness of the programme implementation and expansion
- Adaptation and Innovation



- Outcomes
- Learning and Improvement.

Case Studies

Five case studies were conducted in Western Bay of Plenty/Tauranga (WBoP/T), Palmerston North (PN), Horowhenua, Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), and Gore. Through the five case studies, the evaluation team engaged with 97 people in total.

To select which councils to include in the Cycle 1 case studies, the evaluators aimed for a mix of attributes across the following selection criteria:

- length of time in the programme: pilot or expansion. The evaluation of the pilot programme suggested that initial implementation, including appointing a Coordinator, establishing an Advisory Group, completing the stocktake, and developing a Welcoming Plan, takes approximately 18 months from joining. We used this information to guide our understanding of where councils were likely to be along the implementation journey.
- delivery model (single councils and those delivered as part of a multi-council group)
- geographic (north/south; urban/rural/mixed)
- demographic profile of the community (% Māori population, % born outside Aotearoa New Zealand)
- points of interest in relation to the demographic of newcomers in the community such as having seasonal migrant workers, having a refugee resettlement programme, or having a university with international students.

WCPs where a Coordinator had not yet been recruited were not considered for Cycle 1 case studies.

Three case studies were with WCPs that were established during the pilot, and two were in the early stages of implementation, having joined through the expansion. One case study was something of an outlier having been part of the alliance with other councils during the pilot but had taken the step to go it alone once the pilot concluded.

We contacted the WCP Coordinators of the shortlisted councils and invited them to participate. Due to the short timeframe between invitation and planned site visit, one council declined, and was replaced.

We met with each Coordinator (online) for a planning session, at which time we asked for their help in identifying individuals (including newcomers) and stakeholder organisations that we



should meet with during a four-day site visit.⁸ The assistance and hospitality of the Coordinators during the site visits was greatly appreciated by the evaluation team.

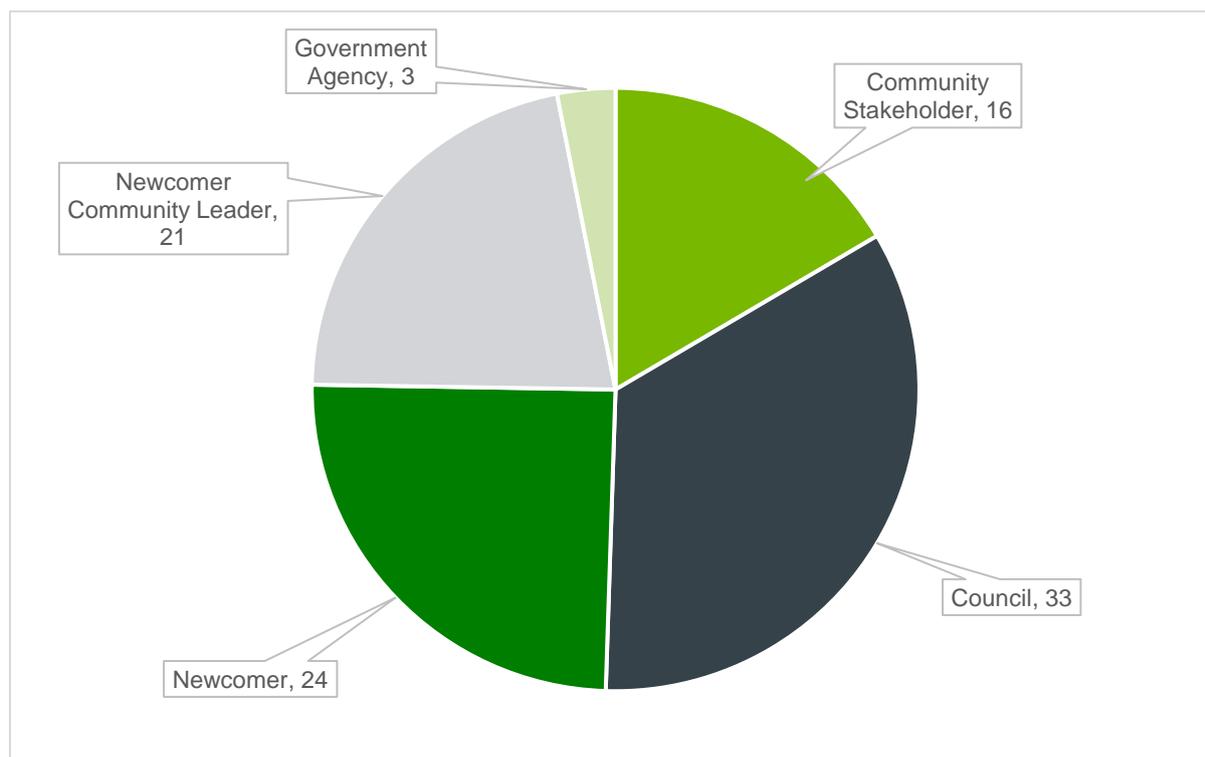
Two evaluators attended each case study. Copies of the interview guides used are embedded in an appendix of this report. The table and figure below show the number of interviewees by case study, cohort, and role.

Table 3: Number of case study interviewees by cohort and council

Cohort	Number of interviewees (<i>n</i>)
Expansion	27⁹
QLDC	21
Horowhenua	6
Pilot	70
Gore	24
PN	25
WBoP/T	21

⁸ Horowhenua was very new in its implementation journey, with fewer people engaged. Thus, a one-day site visit was conducted, compared with four-day visits for other case studies.

⁹ There was one interviewee linked to both a pilot and an expansion WCP. They have been included under Expansion Group 1 in this table.

Figure 1: Cumulative number of engagements by interviewee type**Table 4: Number of case study interviewees by interviewee type**

Interviewee type	Number of interviewees (n)
Community Stakeholder	16
Council	33
Newcomer	24
Newcomer Community Leader	21
Government Agency	3
Total	97

A total of 33 council staff were interviewed from the 'Council' interviewee group, including five Coordinators and 10 elected representatives (Mayors and councillors), with at least one elected representative interviewed in each case study.

Of the 97 case study interviewees, 23 were Advisory Group members.

Engagement with newcomers involved a series of 19 illustrated A3 laminated posters relating to selected intended outcomes described in the WC Standard, and enablers and intended outcomes from the IL. In the posters, the enablers and intended outcomes were reworded into plain English. For each statement, newcomers were asked to put a sticker on the poster indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement. Discussion and



examples were encouraged. Newcomers received a \$50 supermarket voucher as koha to thank them for their contribution to the evaluation. The results are reported in the section *Criterion 4 Outcomes*.

Newcomers interviewed for this evaluation arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand from 15 different countries including those in Asia, Europe and South America.

Survey

The survey was developed by the evaluation team with input by MBIE/INZ. It included questions that investigated awareness, attitudes and perceptions of diversity and newcomer needs, and perceptions about the effectiveness of programme implementation and the Welcoming Plan activities¹⁰ in their community.

The online survey was distributed to six qualifying¹¹ councils in August: Selwyn, Ashburton, Rangitikei, Hamilton, Central Otago, and Whanganui. Councils that had been included as case studies were excluded. As agreed with MBIE and INZ, the evaluation team contacted the WCP Coordinators in the six designated councils, asking them to compile and provide lists of local stakeholders. These lists were brought together in a distribution list.¹² The lists included council employees and key stakeholders such as local community leaders and their members.

The survey was set up in SurveyMonkey. After testing the routing and user friendliness, a link to the online survey was emailed using the established distribution list, and it was provided to one Coordinator for personal distribution. The survey link was provided to 224 people. Two reminders were sent to people who had been invited to participate but had not yet done so. The survey was open to responses for two full weeks plus a third weekend: 5-21 August 2022. Complete responses were received from 65 respondents (a response rate of 29%).

Data monitoring

A data monitoring framework was developed in consultation with MBIE and involves regular collation and analysis of information provided to the evaluation team by MBIE. The following sources of information were selected for monitoring:

- the six-monthly Coordinator reports to INZ¹³
- completed Welcoming Plans

¹⁰ Note that some councils, especially those that joined during the expansion, are yet to develop a Welcoming Plan.

¹¹ During the time the survey was disseminated, Welcoming Communities have a total of 26 member councils. 6 joined in July and were very new to the programme so they have been excluded from participating in the survey. The rest either did not have a Coordinator or were yet to develop a stakeholder list so have been excluded.

¹² One council declined to provide this information, and it was agreed that the evaluators would supply a link to the online survey for them to distribute, on the basis that they recorded and reported the precise number of people they had provided with the survey link.

¹³ Six-monthly progress reports are a reporting requirement for member councils that are receiving seed funding. They are completed by the Coordinator and cover outputs, outcomes, activities planned over the next six months and issues, risks, and challenges. Councils that are no longer receiving seed funding provide such progress reports annually.



- Councils' long-term plans
- selected data from the Migrants Survey 2020 (survey question on migrants who felt they were treated unfairly)
- selected data from the Community Survey (selected survey questions regarding the attendance/participation in any cultural festivals, New Zealand and the community being welcoming, general thoughts about migrants/immigration)
- any applicable accreditation documents.

The main sources of monitoring data drawn on in this interim report were the six-monthly Coordinator reports to INZ and the Welcoming Plans. The surveys data is intended to show change over time and will be included in the final evaluation report.

Data Analysis

Notes made in relation to the focus groups, national stakeholder interviews and case study interviews were uploaded to NVivo20 for coding and thematic analysis. The coding frame was organised by KEQ, with iterative thematic on-coding conducted within that structure.

The survey output was downloaded to Excel for analysis, supplementing the analytics provided within the SurveyMonkey tool.

Data that is being progressively accumulated as part of the ongoing data monitoring activity was reviewed for relevance to Cycle 1, bearing in mind that some of the data is expected to show changes over time (2022 – 2024). As expected, this data source made relatively little contribution to the findings described in this report, compared to the other data sources; but it is anticipated that it will make a greater contribution to subsequent reports.

A brief guide to reading this document

The findings in this Interim Report are presented by Criterion and, with one exception, by key evaluation question within each criterion. The exception is *Criterion 1, Effectiveness of programme implementation and expansion*. The nature of the findings made it more readable to combine the two KEQs and then present the findings in the order of the implementation journey. Care has been taken to distinguish between experiences of WCPs established through the pilot, and those established through the expansion.

In Table 4 above, case study participants are grouped by 'type', with six 'types' identified: business/employer, community stakeholder, council, newcomer, newcomer community leader, and government agency. In the findings section that follows, these 'types' are used to provide the reader with a non-identifying guide to the source of quotations and ideas that have been paraphrased. These terms have also been used in relation to survey respondents and the Coordinator focus groups. An exception is that of 'business/employer': in Cycle 1 only one participant was so classified. To protect their identity, they have been included in the 'community stakeholder' type. With regard to the type 'council', this includes council employees and elected representatives (councillors and mayors).



3.0 FINDINGS FROM DATA COLLECTION CYCLE 1

Criterion 1: Effectiveness of Programme Implementation and Expansion

Criterion 1 has two associated KEQs: one being more relevant to WCPs established through the pilot (KEQ1.1), and the other being more relevant to WCPs established through the expansion (KEQ1.2). KEQ1.1 asks how effectively the programme is being implemented; and KEQ1.2 asks how effectively the expanded roll out is being delivered. These questions were initially analysed separately, but the similarities in the content and findings make it sensible to combine these KEQs in this report. The findings below are organised with the implementation and delivery journey in mind. The interim findings for KEQ1 and KEQ2 are provided first, followed by the combined evidence that supports those findings.

KEQ 1.1 How effectively is the programme being implemented?

Interim findings suggest that the programme has been effectively implemented, but the core implementation documents and processes could be improved.

KEQ 1.2 How effectively is the expanded roll out of the programme being delivered?

Interim findings suggest that the expanded roll-out is being delivered effectively, relative to the stage of implementation.

Expression of Interest

Councils who are interested in joining the WCP are required to submit their Expression of Interest to INZ. A council interviewee from the case studies who had led the development of the Expression of Interest for their council described how much they had appreciated the input and guidance of the INZ Advisor, who they described as “*a fountain of all knowledge ... we had some good conversations ... really helpful, helped shape the Expression of Interest*”.



Drivers for joining the Welcoming Communities Programme

A desire for strong connections between diverse groups has motivated councils to join the Welcoming Communities Programme

A major driver for one council to join the WCP was the council's recognition during the first COVID-19 lockdown period that their connections to their migrant community were insufficient to provide the support that many migrants needed at that time. This was described by numerous council interviewees and confirmed in the information shared by newcomer community leaders. One council interviewee told us that *"COVID highlighted cracks in the community where there was no cohesion; so, when we were looking to connect with the migrant communities in the first lockdown, it was a huge amount of work"*.

In searching for a community development programme that would meet local needs, a council interviewee commented that the Welcoming Standard indicated that the programme offered several benefits:

Having a framework like that is useful because it allows you to tie funding projects and those things into a structure. We're a growing council [district] but we're still relatively small. ... I've been trying to push community development – 'what do we do with community, not for community' – so identifying a programme like Welcoming Communities allows us to do that as well, building capability within the community itself to respond to their own needs and wants. (Council)

A major driver for another council to join the WCP was described by council interviewees, community stakeholders, and government agencies: the district was soon to experience increased population diversity, because of the announcement that the district was to become a host location through the refugee resettlement programme. Further, growth of the migrant population was anticipated once COVID-19 restrictions were eased and lifted.

Amongst WCPs that commenced through the pilot, interviewees from one council described how well the WCP appeared to fit with their community development programme, noting that the seed funding was an incentive, and that applying to join the pilot was 'a no-brainer'. The 'no-brainer' term was used by interviewees at other councils as well, suggesting that elected representatives and staff alike considered the WCP a good fit for how they see themselves and their aspirations for their communities. The same term was used by an elected representative when they were asked if there had been any consideration of withdrawing from the programme once the seed funding ended – they respond by saying that staying in the programme was "a no-brainer": *"Council has always been very happy with this programme"* (Council).

Other drivers for joining the WCP included attracting skilled and talented people to the region and retaining them; and connecting existing services for newcomers through a recognised programme.



Aspirations for a more inclusive environment have motivated community groups to connect with the WCP

From the case study councils that joined as part of the expansion programme, newcomer community leaders and community stakeholders expressed hopes for future advantages through forging connections between their group with other community groups, creating a more inclusive environment. This was high on the list of potential benefits, for example: *“I really love the idea that there is a group of us who can come up with some solutions to better welcome people to our amazing community, to actually live here and thrive here”* (Newcomer Community Leader). *“[The WCP] is a very novel and beautiful initiative ... I view [the region] like a mini-Dubai There needs to be a good way of cementing all the communities together. We can't have a separated community: that would be the worst thing to happen”* (Newcomer Community Leader).

Another newcomer community leader expressed their hope that the council itself may become more diverse. Further, by role modelling inclusive practices through a council-based programme, it was hoped that businesses would adopt such practices, and it was hoped that the receiving community more generally would regard newcomers as more than just ‘workforce’: *“I want to contribute to this society”* (Newcomer Community Leader).

Support from Immigration New Zealand

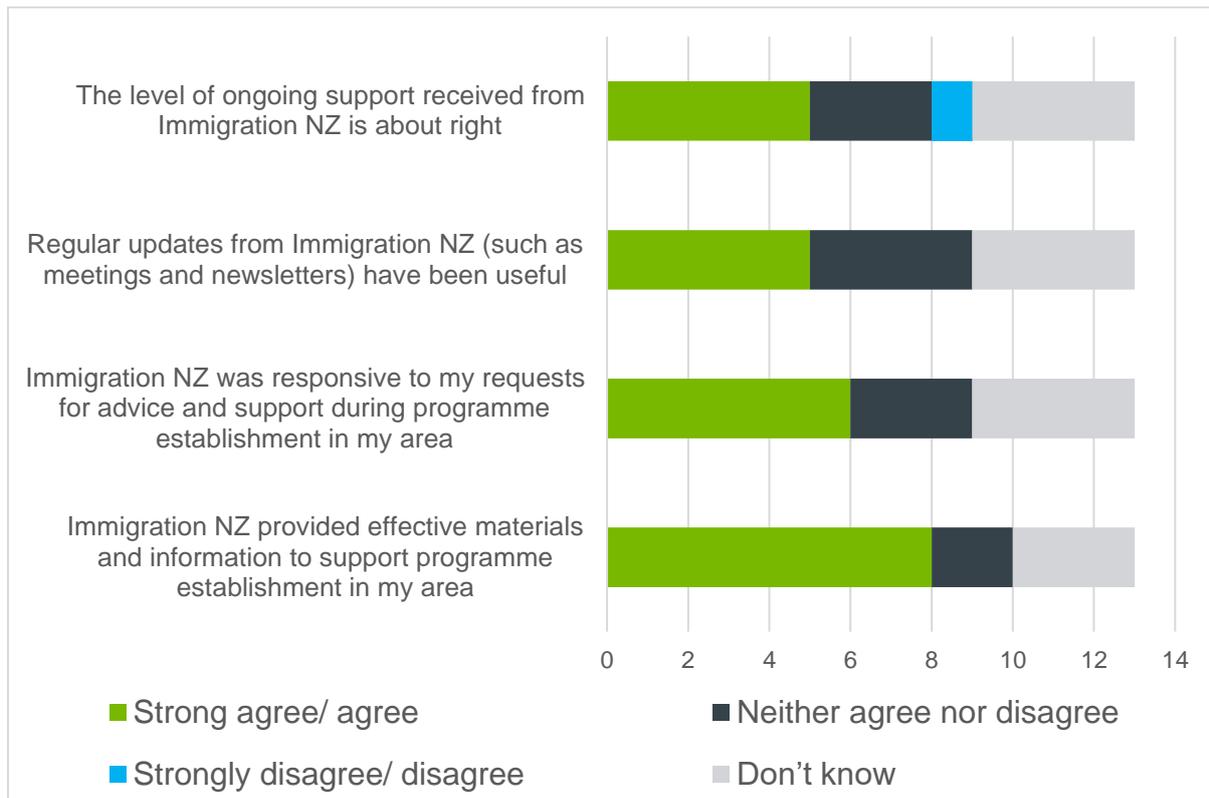
Support from Immigration New Zealand is valued

Case study councils consider their contacts at INZ to be helpful and supportive, working actively to keep the Coordinators informed. However, some council interviewees and some national stakeholders considered that the WCP resources could benefit from updating. One council interviewee from an expansion council commented that the templates provided for the stocktake and Expression of Interest were *“pretty old – from the pilot”*. There were also comments in this regard about the WC Standard (discussed in detail below). Similarly, the resource *Putting out the Welcoming Mat* was described by councils and national stakeholders as having been useful, but in need of updating to include more recent case studies and examples from the WCPs in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Survey respondents had mixed views on the support they received from INZ. There was stronger agreement that materials and information provided by INZ to support the establishment of the programme were effective; but there were more mixed views when respondents were asked about the responsiveness of INZ in providing advice and support, the usefulness of regular updates through meetings and newsletters, and about the levels of ongoing support provided.



Figure 2: Survey results about the support received from INZ



Programme establishment support from INZ is good, but the resources could benefit from refinement

Some council interviewees and national stakeholders considered there may be benefit from refreshing some of the templates and files provided by INZ to help get new WCPs set up. For example, a council interviewee considered some resources to have been relevant to the pilot, but they could be made more useful for councils joining through the expansion by leveraging the learnings from the pilot, such as by including examples from the programmes established through the pilot. A national stakeholder commented that they felt the WC Standard was too long, and that it could be revised so that the principles were developed “*from scratch, rather than being built on principles from overseas*”.

At the time of one case study, the WC Standard was being used to guide the development of a WCP Workplan. The Workplan was expected to tie in with the council’s Community and Wellbeing Strategy, creating an alignment that would be a first step in embedding the WCP into the mahi of the council more generally. A council interviewee considered the WC Standard to have been very useful for this activity. The WC Standard was described as “*fantastic – the eight elements, the descriptions. I understand them. ... For me, they’re clear – they talk*” (Council).

Council interviewees from two councils reported that *Putting out the Welcoming Mat* is a resource that they use to spread awareness and understanding of the WCP. It “*helps to simplify and look at tangible ideas that fit with the [intended] outcomes [described in the WC Standard]*” (Council).



However, while interviewees found the two resources useful, they provided suggestions to enhance both the *Welcoming Standard* and *Putting out the Welcoming Mat*. “*I think the language needs to be more accessible. ... I don't think they have been rewritten since the start of the programme. ... It can be hard to explain the meaning, especially to people whose first language is not English*” (Council).

In terms of developing the Welcoming Plan, none of the case study councils that had joined the programme as part of the expansion had commenced this mahi, as they were still early in the implementation journey.

Council interviewees described receiving excellent one-on-one support from INZ, both at the Expression of Interest stage and early in the implementation. Present and former senior advisors from INZ were praised. For example, a former INZ employee was described as “*wonderful. ... [they] helped shape the Expression of Interest. ... A fountain of all knowledge*” (Council). Another interviewee noted “*the senior advisor from INZ is very responsive: we can call [them], and [they] immediately send us what we need*” (Council). On the other hand, some Coordinator focus group participants felt that new WCP Coordinators should not need to ask for things: INZ should know what is needed and provide these pre-emptively.

Five out of the eight survey respondents, all of which identified themselves as Local Government (council), agreed or strongly agreed that the information provided by INZ prior to joining the WCP gave them a good understanding of the programme.

One council interviewee reported that the local INZ Relationship Manager attends meetings and is proving to be “*a wonderful connection [to INZ] ... we didn't have that before [the council joined the programme]. ... [They are] is very active; [they are] 'present'*”. In contrast, in the Coordinator Focus Groups, more INZ support was called for, from INZ Relationship Managers. This suggests that the experience described above could either be an exception; or that the support provided by INZ Relationship Managers has improved between the time the focus groups were held in March and the case study in July.

The Welcoming Communities Standard may benefit from a refresh

The WC Standard is seen as a valued resource which gave something tangible to work towards, increasing council and community buy-in. Council interviewees, newcomer community leaders, and community stakeholders generally considered the intended outcomes described in the WC Standard to make sense for the communities they serve. For example, one Council interviewee said that “*it's like the whole brand is something everyone can get on board with and it's a real thing to shape the efforts*”.

Nevertheless, many interviewees from councils, community stakeholders and national stakeholders considered that the WC Standard needs to be simplified. That is, outcomes need to be less complex, described in plain English, and reduced in number. Other suggestions included:

- redesigning the WC Standard with increased mana whenua input, based on te Tiriti principles, and informed by learnings from Aotearoa New Zealand rather than overseas
- opening the outcomes to consultation with community and mana whenua



- that it should be less prescriptive
- that the WC Standard delineate between what council (as an organisation) needs to do, and what communities need to do/be/have.

It would be interesting, when we do a review, what the Standard could look like starting from scratch rather than built on the principles from overseas. I think stemming from that there would be more focus on mana whenua being involved rather than a sub-outcome and more of a main element and I think just a bit more a of 'Aotearoa flavour' would make it better, I think. (National Stakeholder)

Coordinators' hui have been helpful, but need to develop as more councils join the programme

Monthly online Coordinator meetings were described by council interviewees as a strength of the programme. A council interviewee who had contributed to the development of the Expression of Interest recalled, "*it was really good having the network of other Coordinators to meet with. ... It was useful to test ideas and see what they were doing*".

However, now that more councils are joining the programme, some council interviewees suggested that there may be a need to reshape the monthly hui with Coordinators. It was suggested that smaller meetings may be useful, attended by Coordinators that have a common interest. Three possibilities were suggested by council interviewees:

- WCPs in locations within proximity, such as the greater Southland region.
- WCPs in locations with contextual and/or demographic similarities (such as the type of newcomer groups residing the community - recognising that the needs of former refugee communities are different to the needs of migrants more generally).
- Meeting with other Coordinators who are at a similar stage in the implementation journey, possibly including a more experienced Coordinator operating as a mentor to newer Coordinators.

WCP Coordinators said they would appreciate more opportunities for connection across regions to share learnings about what is and is not working. It was mentioned that connection opportunities between Coordinators have been reduced since COVID-19, and that it would be good to increase these.

More exemplars, more opportunities for Coordinators to connect and share learning. It's not just about this programme, by creating connections between the Coordinators you're creating strong connections across New Zealand, to regularly connect around these topics. We have a few networks across New Zealand but nothing consistent. (Council)

More storytelling around the programme. Not replicating it but 'cross pollination' to take learnings from this programme and apply to other contexts (for example, ground up engagement approach). And the learning is the fact that you need to have that start from scratch with



people going out to communities, and having communities involved in what's being developed. (Community Stakeholder)

Advisory Groups

Advisory Groups differed across the case studies

Most member councils in the case studies have Advisory Groups (one case study council was yet to establish its Advisory Group). The size of the Advisory Groups vary in each council, with some having fewer than 10 members while other have more than 20. Advisory Groups also operate differently. In some Advisory Groups members taking longer-term leadership roles, with responsibility for specific tasks or activities: the Coordinator “*supports other members to make things happen rather than leading the action directly*”. Other Advisory Groups operate less formally, with the Coordinator being more hands-on, providing direct leadership rather than support.

In some councils, the INZ Regional Relationship Managers are part of the Advisory Group, and this was considered by council interviewees to be enormously helpful.

One council had recently set up their Advisory Group of 12 people, including an elected councillor. The Advisory Group works with the WCP Coordinator, the local INZ Relationship Manager, and a representative from the Ministry of Ethnic Communities. The Advisory Group had met just once, for an introductory meeting.

Advisory Groups have mana and influence

WCP Advisory Groups are widely considered by council, community stakeholder and newcomer community leader interviewees to be an important way that the WCP engages with the community on a regular basis. Advisory Groups were observed to be and described as forums where trust and friendship are established, paving the way for collaborative mahi through caring relationships. A community stakeholder interviewee described “*a sense of trust and honesty*” within the Advisory Group in their region. A council interviewee described Advisory Group meetings as a place where “*things get done*”, and interviewees from two councils commented on their perception that the Advisory Group has mana, noting that the group is taken seriously by elected representatives and council staff.

From an evaluative perspective, the strength of relationships within Advisory Groups is good evidence of successful implementation of the WCP. Several the councils are still new and at the early stage of implementation, having very recently formed their Advisory Group. The interviewed Advisory Group members from more established councils showed a clear understanding of the aim and purpose of the WCP.

Some interviewees referred to the amount of work performed by Advisory Group members, commenting that their commitment was evident:

I'm totally convinced with the concept and how it works. For example, yesterday was a two-hour meeting. Not all meetings are like that – sometimes I go to a two-hour meeting and want to get out – but the Advisory Group [isn't like this]. There's passion and buy in. (Council)



Coordinators

Coordinators are highly valued by their councils and communities

Newcomer community leaders, community stakeholders, and interviewees from the councils praised the work of Coordinators, including for driving WCPs to a point where they have their own momentum. Coordinators were described as approachable, supportive, personable, passionate, motivated, and engaging people who are great communicators and listeners (which was noted to be particularly important in culturally sensitive spaces). Coordinators were praised for their high visibility, their skill at gaining buy-in, their ability to connect groups and individuals (including with council), their connections to the community and their open, responsive, collaborative, and holistic approach. The experience, skills and approach of Coordinators were highly valued, including their support for diversity and their awareness of the need for people from minority groups to feel safe.

Coordinators were described as very encouraging of community group growth. They are trusted by their communities and passionate about offering their support to them. Coordinators have their feet on the ground in communities and are proactive in face-to-face engagement, often outside of regular working hours. Interviewees highlighted the importance of having these skills in the Coordinator role to maximise the benefits of the programme, particularly regarding relationship building.

It was [the Coordinator's] ability to understand the need and find the most effective place to help. (Council)

I've seen other programmes, and when you don't have that passion, it's not the same. (Newcomer Community Leader)

I think the strength of the programme really lies in who runs it. (Newcomer Community Leader)

If I could clone [the Coordinator] ... And I think that's the measure - the right people and the right skillset with the independence to make it work. (Council)

[The Coordinator] has made some pretty big gains connecting to some community leaders, and it seems to me that [they] have created some momentum between council, partner agencies and community groups. (Council)



community outreach work rather than such desk-based work, which would therefore require further resourcing.

Many council interviewees stated that the WCP requires more funding, with the preference that government funding for the initiative was ongoing rather than seed funding.

Community Consultation

Community consultation is well-embedded in the practice model of established WCPs

WCP Advisory Groups are described as a forum for ongoing community consultation, both through their composition and through the relationships that develop between members. Coordinators are generators of consultation activities with the wider community, such as planning and hosting hui. For example, in two case study councils, council interviewees described highly successful community-based hui that sought input from across the community prior to the development of local WC Plan, so that community-identified needs and priorities would be at the fore of the WC Plan.

In one council, council interviewees described how the outputs from community consultation drove the development of the WC Plan. Following frank and illuminating consultation, an attempt was made to develop the WC Plan modelling this on the eight elements of the WC Standard. However, this approach did not result in a WC Plan that reflected what the community had identified through the consultation and therefore amendments were made: amendments that simultaneously commenced the process of embedding the WCP into other council mahi.

*We reworked it, putting our community's priorities up front and then showed the connections to the INZ eight points. We need a community-led approach so that we can be enablers. Our Welcoming Plan crosses over into other [council] workspaces ... so there are some nice synergies and integration.
(Council)*

The six-monthly progress reports from Coordinators indicate that the purpose and type of engagements with relevant stakeholder groups by WCP Coordinators varies across councils. Several Coordinators reported ad hoc and informal engagements with a diverse range of individuals and organisations in their local community. A common aim for many of these engagements was to spread awareness about the WCP. Coordinators included information on more formal and structured engagements with individuals and groups. The aim of these engagements was reported as inviting people, such as newcomer community leaders and members of the receiving community, to help deliver the programme in their communities. Some Coordinators report that these latter engagements were with iwi representatives and local Māori. These engagements were also reported to contribute the adaptation of the WCP in each area.



Continual community consultation is a hallmark of WCP Coordinators

It was widely recognised, by council and non-council interviewees, that Coordinators are and need to be very well connected in their communities to 'join the dots', facilitating connections between individuals, between individuals and groups, and between groups, and continually building an understanding of the developing needs of their community. In addition to this continual consultation, council interviewees described consultation activities conducted at scale, such as to inform the development or revision of the WC Plan.

For example, when a community-wide hui was held to explore the needs and priorities of the community, people from community-based organisations and council were all surprised at the number of community organisations present and overall attendance, and the passion for involvement, as illustrated in the quotations in the figure below.

Figure 4: Things people said about the hui

“The turn-out was incredible ... the room was packed. ... It felt like everyone was really keen to get involved.” (Council)

“People were very 'present': they wanted to provide feedback.” (Council)

“It was super-cool ... It was cool to see what we are doing well, but everyone was also very honest about what we are not doing so well.” (Newcomer Community Leader)

“Seeing all those migrant communities in one room was 'Wow!' and also 'Heck!'” (Newcomer Community Leader)

“The vibes and energy - everyone was so fired-up.” (Newcomer Community Leader)

“My heart was full, looking at the people there. Coming here nine years ago, we felt very lonely.” (Newcomer Community Leader)

This hui was held not long before the case study site visit, and so was fresh in the minds of many interviewees, but similar sentiments were expressed about hui hosted in other communities, including in more established programmes, where hui focused on revising the Welcoming Plan.

Stocktake needs assessments are being completed

In one council, the stocktake exercise was underway at the time of the case study. Cognisant of the amount of work required to do the stocktake, and the amount of work required to establish and build relationships between the council and the community to launch the WCP, the council contracted a consultant to conduct the stocktake. The completed stocktake was intended to inform the development of the Welcoming Plan. Developing the Welcoming Plan was expected to take a further 18 months, with the stocktake needing to progress through council processes before its release.



Council interviewees considered community consultation to be very important to developing community buy-in of the programme. Hui for community consultation were designed to provide an environment that was considered welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of frank discussion, with an elected council representative from one member council noting that hui participants “didn’t hold back” on expressing their needs and aspirations for the community.

In other councils involved in the pilot, council interviewees described similar processes for refreshing their Welcoming Plans. Neither of the two case study councils that joined through the expansion had commenced development of their Welcoming Plan.

The evaluation has found that WCP Coordinators report a variety of engagements and activities to conduct a needs assessment and adapt their Welcoming Plan to fit their local community. Several Coordinators reported engagements with both the newcomer and receiving community to gather information on the needs of both groups. These engagements, typically reported as ‘Stocktakes’, were reported by many Coordinators as helping to identify the services currently available to meet the needs of newcomers as well as identifying gaps in services. Most councils reported that their stocktake had been completed or that it was planned as a part of the programme development. Many Coordinators reported conducting community hui/community engagements to inform the development of their Welcoming Plans. These meetings were used to identify opportunities, issues, concerns and suggestions to inform the development and adaptation of their Welcoming Plans. Some examples of areas discussed and socialised include:

- increasing assistance for integration
- producing information about communities and regions
- providing timeframes for deliverables and actions within Welcoming Communities.

Partners

Some WCPs are becoming increasingly well-aligned with the mahi of their local council

An indicator of implementation effectiveness, especially for more established member councils, is the extent to which the WCP is aligned with or embedded into the work of the council. There were varying opinions about the extent to which this has been achieved.

Alignments between council mahi and the WCP were readily described by interviewees who work for the council or are elected members of the council. One council interviewee described how, when the Council Strategic Plan was reviewed, values such as ‘inclusiveness’ were added, which was “*triggered by the Welcoming Communities Programme*”. In another council, an elected representative described the WCP as a “*critical part of the Community Strategy*” and that it was as “*a joy*” to see how the work of the WCP was forging connections that “*added a string to the Council’s bow*”.

However, achieving such an alignment was described by some council interviewees as a slow process. They reported that achieving this had been an “*ongoing battle*” that remains a work



in progress, but that they were beginning to see evidence of the programme in council documents.

Even amongst newer programmes, there was a strong feeling that there is good alignment between the aims of the WCP and mahi that is already happening in the community. Interviewees expected the WCP to build on pre-established council and community-based initiatives. A council interviewee commented that they had observed “a *shift*” over recent years, whereby there is now a view and understanding about the importance of migrant settlement support, which they considered vital to the future of local government.

Pre-existing programmes are aligned with the WCP

Council interviewees from two case studies reported that there were many programmes in their community targeted at new migrants prior to the WCP being established, and that these are now aligned with the programme. A council interviewee commented that “*we were heavily involved with settlement support ... we had an International Student Programme. ... The WCP provided a way of grouping these programmes together: the initiative fits nicely with where we are and what we do.*”

The number and type of stakeholder organisations involved in the delivery of welcoming activities varies

In their six-monthly progress reports to INZ, councils reported how local and national organisations, such as NZ Police and multicultural community groups, were involved in the delivery of welcoming activities.¹⁴ A small number of councils reported the involvement of iwi and local Māori in the delivery of activities. From the review of six-monthly reports from councils to INZ, it was not clear how councils were involving other stakeholder organisations in the delivery of activities that were part of the WCP. Some councils did not provide this level of information in their reporting.

WCPs may benefit from more guidance about engaging with Māori

In all case studies, engagement with Māori, especially mana whenua, appeared to be less extensive than the ‘prominent role’ envisaged by the WC Standard.¹⁵ Varying explanations were provided by council interviewees:

- Competing viewpoints from multiple iwi groups were an obstacle to engagement.
- A history of troubled relations between the council and mana whenua made it politically and practically difficult for the WCP Coordinator to develop a relationship.

¹⁴ Activities carried out through the WCP, as per their Welcoming Plan, are aligned with at least one of the eight elements of the Welcoming Plan. These ‘Welcoming Activities’ are intended to innovatively make the community more welcoming of newcomers.

¹⁵ The WC Standard includes the following desired outcome, in respect of the Inclusive Leadership element: “as the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori – represented by tangata whenua, mana whenua, iwi, and hapu and/or other hāpori Māori – have a prominent role in Welcoming Plan activities” p16.



- A council interviewee reported that their interactions with mana whenua led them to consider that mana whenua felt that they, not the council, should spearhead the WCP; and/or that WCP should pay mana whenua for its services to combat claims of 'tokenism'.
- In some case studies, relationships between the WCP and mana whenua had been slow to resume as the community came to terms with 'living with' COVID-19.
- Mana whenua stakeholders were unavailable for evaluation interviews (or other Welcoming Communities activities) due to other priorities such as preparing for the forthcoming Matariki ceremonies but were otherwise described as being 'in partnership' with the council for the purposes of the WCP.

A survey respondent who identified as a representative of a local marae, assisted with the establishment of a WCP by attending activities and events for stakeholder organisations. This person commented that their input “*was more for the benefit of the Committee [Advisory Group?], not the refugees. As far as I can see we had no impact at all.*” Comments from the respondent seem to conflate the work of the WCP with that of the refugee resettlement agency, suggesting there may be some confusion about the purpose of the intended partnership between the WCP and local iwi. As a result of their dissatisfaction with the lack of impact they felt they had, they commented: “*I have basically withdrawn from active participation in this process as the opportunity [for ongoing meaningful engagement with refugee newcomers] has been lost.*”

A community stakeholder survey respondent commented, “*I’m not seeing any iwi at the table. ... Te Tiriti needs to be checked continuously against the Welcoming Communities Plan.*”

Others also stressed the need for mana whenua to be central to the programme:

People come in from an iwi/Māori perspective and there’s a couple of big criticisms. First, where’s their say as a Treaty Partner? And where’s their ability to show manaakitanga to new arrivals? That’s a big step in actually connecting (Government Agency).

Several cases study participants, including national stakeholders, community stakeholders, people from government agencies, and people from councils, suggested that it may be beneficial to have cross-cultural competency training for council employees including (but not limited to) those who provide services to newcomers. This includes council staff who engage with the community at local swimming pools, libraries, and community centres. Tikanga education for newcomers was also suggested, and it was noted that these are already provided in some communities and were understood to be highly valued by newcomers.

On the other hand, council interviewees described efforts to include mana whenua in the development of their Welcoming Plan, noting that this was mana-enhancing, to the benefit and enjoyment of everyone.

The business sector appears to be less engaged than suggested through the Welcoming Standard

Engagement with the business sector was generally low amongst the case studied councils. Where it exists or has existed, it presently appears to require more work than engaging with newcomer community groups and community stakeholders. One council interviewee noted



“they just haven't been at the table as much as I would have liked.” An interviewee who operates a business described their frustration and disappointment with the council and INZ during the COVID-19 restrictions. They explained that this negative experience had impacted on their willingness to engage with the WCP, as it is a council-run programme supported by INZ.

Welcoming Activities

The nature of activities delivered has some alignment with the stage of implementation

The ‘Welcoming Activities’ delivered through the WC programmes vary by number and type. Councils in the early stages of the WCP reported on activities that involved stakeholder engagement or activities that involved planning for the establishment and future of the programme, such as preparatory work for the development of the Welcoming Plan.

Commensurate with their stage along the implementation journey, councils in the early stages of the programme reported a lower number of completed activities. Examples of welcoming activities for councils at the early stage of the programme establishment include:

- workshops with the community to develop the Welcome Plan
- completing the early accreditation stage
- hui/meetings with local organisations and stakeholders
- planning and development of media materials such as webpages and booklets.

Established WCPs reported welcoming activities involving both the newcomer and receiving communities, such as multicultural celebrations. Established councils reported a higher number of these activities compared to those in earlier stages.

Activities and events aligned with the WCP and intended for newcomers are relevant, inclusive, and enjoyable

Case study interviewees including those from councils, newcomer community leaders and community stakeholders spoke enthusiastically and proudly about a wide range of activities that are relevant for newcomers. An example of a welcoming activity that supports migrant workers, is a council sponsored *Welcoming Communities Inclusive Business Award* as part of their regional annual Business Awards. In another community, isolation amongst rurally based migrant women was being addressed, in part, through regular coffee mornings organised through an international community group, which has representation on the local WCP Advisory Group. In the same community, newcomers are helped to learn to drive through the WCP alignment with the Rural Education Activities Programme (known as REAP Aotearoa).

An example of an innovation designed to meet identified needs among international students is the Global Ambassador Programmes. Global Ambassador Programmes have been operating in two of the case study councils. This innovative programme to provide leadership opportunities for international students was designed by a WCP to meet a need identified through the stocktake activities. The programme was later adopted by another council, where



it is funded through Education New Zealand and the Ethnic Communities Development Fund, and young ambassadors are recruited through secondary schools. A council interviewee commented on the successes enjoyed by the young ambassadors after their time in the programme: *“I’m really proud of the things they have gone on to do. ... I hope that it was a useful step forward for them to grow their confidence and relationships.”*

Another example of an innovative welcoming activity organised through a newcomer community group is a monthly coffee morning attended by newcomer women of all ages and their young children. As part of the case study, the evaluators attended the monthly coffee morning, where attendees participated in the newcomers focus group activity. Over coffee and scones, the evaluators listened to the women share their experiences of isolation and meeting others and forming close bonds through this group.

Through the coffee group I have found more friends, more ladies, and I can share my feelings and things. When my baby was due, the ladies made food and looked after me, just like family. Because there was no family to help me here. They looked after me and did a baby shower. They made me very happy. (Newcomer)

Community events, especially ‘at scale’ annual events, both for newcomers and for receiving communities, were held up by many interviewees, from councils and government agencies, community stakeholders and newcomer community leaders as indicators of the success of the programme. Such events were sometimes running prior to the inception of the local WCP, and WCPs have varying levels of involvement in the organisation of such events. Nevertheless, the perceived success and growth of such events were widely raised as evidence that the WCP is having a positive impact in the community. Newcomer community leaders described the enjoyment their members get from showcasing their culture through festivals, and they enjoy doing this alongside other newcomer groups, suggesting an implicit recognition of similarities in experiences and their shared humanity. Having food at such events is widely considered a drawcard for the receiving community. However, several interviewees, particularly community stakeholders but also from some councils, cautioned that attendance at such events by members of the receiving community should not be conflated with developing an understanding of ethnic differences that will reduce racism.

Citizenship ceremonies and powhiri are held up as examples of the success of the programme, with one Mayor commenting that the powhiri *“was an incredibly moving day ... the way mana whenua and the immigrant communities handled it.”*

Newcomers who took part in the case studies mostly considered welcoming activities to be well-organised and suited to their needs. Further, survey respondents tended to agree or strongly agree that the WCP is delivering what newcomers need to feel welcome; that it is meeting the needs of the community; and that it is connecting local programmes, services and groups.

The buy-in of the receiving community is essential, but it is not always getting the attention needed

Interviewees from councils feel that more work is needed to get the receiving community on board with the WCP. Several expressed the view that it is through the buy-in of the receiving community that racism will be reduced. Working toward this, one council interviewee described



the considerable efforts that bring about *Welcoming Week*, a national annual week of activities that are aimed at the receiving community, demonstrating to the community the benefits of having newcomers in the region. A council interviewee commented that the WCP needs to address “*how we get [the receiving community] on board*”, further noting that the WCP could be more overt in its role of directly addressing racism, because the “*appetite amongst the public [for diversity] is not universal*”. The evaluation did not engage directly with the general public, so is unable to comment on the general perceptions of this population.

Benefits of the Welcoming Communities Programme

The power of strengthening connections demonstrates the potential of the WCP

The main aspect identified as ‘working well’ in case study councils with newer programmes was the new and strengthening connections between the councils and community-based groups, and between the community-based groups themselves. Community stakeholders and newcomer community leaders talked of “putting faces to names”, and the hui, described above (see Figure 4), was a good example of this. They also talked very positively about the response of community groups to new initiatives, such as the pending arrival of the first group of refugees to the community through the refugee resettlement programme, and the provision of a Muslim burial ground. These initiatives were interpreted by interviewees as being due to, supported by, or a special focus for the newly formed WCP, and they were held up as examples of the potential of the programme.

Connections between diverse individuals (and the groups they represent) at the Advisory Group was noted as a strength of the WCP, as was the importance of having a Coordinator who is good at mobilising people and fostering enthusiasm about the programme.

Groups affiliated to the WCP describe benefits for themselves and for the communities they represent through strengthened relationships

Community stakeholder groups and newcomer community leaders commented that they feel their engagement with the WCP provides them the benefit of having ready access to decision makers. This viewpoint was recognised by councils that the WCP “*gives ‘ordinary’ people access to the council and elected members*”.

The interviews with newcomer community leaders highlighted a substantial degree of collaboration between newcomer groups, and between newcomer groups and community stakeholder organisations. These groups and organisations often become connected through participation on local WCP Advisory Groups, and/or through direct contacts with the local WCP Coordinator. These interviewees, especially the newcomer community leaders, consider the WCP to have a degree of mana, and they recognise that this is extended to their group through association. For example, when a newcomer network approached the local Chamber of Commerce to host an event for newcomers about developing an effective curriculum vitae, the network “*were taken more seriously: ‘Welcoming Communities’ had more weight to it*” (Newcomer Community Leader).



Pre-existing community-based programmes were considered to have been strengthened through their affiliation with the WCP. Some groups have benefitted from WCP Coordinator advice that has led to outcomes such as developing successful funding applications, and the ability to open a bank account as a not-for-profit community-based organisation.

Several newcomer community leaders commented on the strengthened relationship they have with NZ Police, particularly in councils where NZ Police is represented in the Advisory Group. From the point of view of these participants, this is a positive indicator of the programme working well, especially among newcomer communities where newcomers have arrived from places where there is little trust in enforcement services.

During the fieldwork, evaluators witnessed the strength of relationships across three WCPs, when they observed an Advisory Group meeting, attended a coffee morning with an international newcomer group, and observed a workshop-style meeting. Relations of genuine care and a willingness to support each other's mahi was strongly evident. The relationships forged and strengthened through the WCP can be interpreted as evidence that the programme is well implemented. As one community stakeholder told us, strengthened relationships "behind the scenes" enable better services for newcomers.

Newcomer community leaders remarked that they found the WCP supportive and helpful, seeing benefits for their community groups in being involved. This included networking and relationships, and specific initiatives as well as seminars, training, workshops, and internships.

I think what they were doing prior to COVID – seminars and training sessions, they were helping us not just to learn and have more resources, but also to share with the other organisations and make our organisations stronger. (Newcomer Community Leader)

Another Newcomer Community Leader interviewee described that the WCP in their region as:

giving us some guidance in training us how we can do things. And also, they allow us to be able to meet other communities and talk to them to see what they are doing and what they are facing. It helps us to understand that sometimes maybe we're not doing the right thing, or we're struggling a lot in an area – but others have struggled a lot too, and we can follow them in how they came out the other side. (Newcomer Community Leader)

Survey questions about the strength of relationships with other groups and organisations associated with the WCP returned more varied experiences compared to those described by case study participants. 28/65 (43.1%) people did not agree that their organisation has stronger relationships with other organisations/groups, newcomers and the council due to their involvement with the WCP, compared to 36/65 (55.4%) who agreed or strongly agreed.¹⁶ Out of the 28 people who did not agree, most identified as members of community groups or non-government agencies providing settlement services, social services or other support to

¹⁶ Noting that one survey respondent skipped this question.

newcomers. The survey data did not provide any additional narrative content that has not already been covered by the case study data.

Lessons from the pilot are mostly reflected in the expansion programmes

Lessons learned from the evaluation of the Welcoming Communities Pilot, released in November 2019, are summarised into three broad headings:

- lessons related to community engagement in the programme
- lessons related to key components of the WCP
- lessons related to council engagement in the programme.

Community engagement

The pilot evaluation advised that community groups and networks were essential to the success of the programme and that community engagement needed to be maximised. In this present evaluation, it was apparent that Coordinators in the expanded programme recognise this point and were hard at work forging and strengthening connections with and between community groups and networks.



Figure 5:
Workshop.
Used with permission.

The evaluators attended (as observers) a workshop of 15 community stakeholders from 14 diverse organisations, that are likely to be included in the WCP, possibly as Advisory Group members. Through the workshop they collaborated to ready their community for the arrival of its first refugee families. As people worked their way informally around the room, adding their ideas and information to topic posters, their engagement with each other was meaningful and respectful. The evaluators observed relationships developing through a shared sense of purpose.

In another community, not long before the case study site visit, a hui with 130 community stakeholders and newcomer community leaders considered the eight elements of the WC Standard and gave their points of view about what these might mean for the region as the WCP becomes established.

Key components of the WCP

The pilot evaluation recognised how crucial the Coordinator is to the success of the programme, and the importance of the Advisory Group to socialise the programme and make things happen. These aspects are covered in detail in this interim evaluation report in the Criterion 1 and Criterion 4 sections.



Council engagement

The pilot evaluation identified a need for ‘programme champions’ amongst councillors and the wider community; and the need for councils to take a longer-term view of the funding and resourcing needs of the WCP. In the present evaluation, interviewees in two case studies with the councils who joined the programme through the expansion included elected representatives, some of whom were Advisory Group members. These interviewees considered themselves ‘champions’ and ‘advocates’ for the WCP. Although this is helpful for the councils concerned, it is unclear if ‘advocacy’ was recognised by the council as an explicit part of their role.

Regarding the need identified in the pilot evaluation for councils to develop a longer view of the funding and resourcing needed; there are substantial differences in council investment between the programmes. Some programmes have the benefit of a full-time or near full-time Coordinator, whilst for other councils, being a WCP Coordinator is just one their council roles.

Accreditation

Accreditation is valued, but the process could be simplified

Some councils described how they use their Accreditation achievements as part of its economic development campaigns, framing their community as a superior place to invest, due to its welcoming nature. For instance, one council interviewee noted that “*achieving accreditation can be a pathway for developing connections with businesses and attracting businesses to the region*”.

While applying for Stage 1 Accreditation is straightforward, the mahi necessary to advance through Accreditation Stages 2, 3 and 4 was described as considerable, with some council interviewees regarding this as distracting from the core community-facing work of the WCP. The effort required was described as largely to do with compiling the evidence folder: “*it’s a big job, pulling it all together*” (Council). Council interviewees suggested that moving to a digital format rather than requiring hard copies would be a useful start to reducing the effort required. Another suggestion was to think creatively regarding how councils could show evidence for Accreditation, such as in the form of a video or presentation.

However, progressing through the optional Accreditation Stages (beyond Stage 1) was not viewed as a goal by some councils. Comments about capacity serve to reiterate the points above, about the size of the task and the desire to prioritise community-facing work.

It is not necessarily our goal: we just want to do what we do well. Appreciating that we only have so much capacity, I think it is more realistic to say, ‘Let’s work on this plan and try and improve what we are doing, introduce new things, maintain things such as established community events’, and maybe it [an increased level of Accreditation] will happen as a matter of course, rather than putting too much pressure on the idea. (Council)



Criterion 2 Adaptation and Innovation

KEQ 2.1 How well has the programme been adapted to the needs and context of the communities it is delivered in?

Interim findings suggest that councils are effectively able to meet the needs of their local communities.

This KEQ was addressed in case studies of councils involved in the pilot and the expansion of the programme. Our analysis was informed by comparisons made between data collected from councils involved at these two stages of the programme.

As set out in the evaluation plan, adaptation is defined by programme delivery being informed by community needs. Specifically, evidence was sought that councils have adapted programme development, the content of their Welcoming Plan and programme delivery to meet community needs, barriers and contextual factors.

Unique needs of the community are recognised

Member councils from the case studies almost all expressed a clear understanding of the unique needs of their local communities. This was true for councils that were part of the pilot and to a somewhat lesser degree for the two new member councils that joined through the expansion, as would be expected at the early stage of implementation. Councils at all stages of implementation described how needs were identified and prioritised, such as through community hui when local Welcoming Plans were being developed and/or revised. For the councils that joined through the pilot (noting that the two newer member councils either did not yet have an Advisory Group or this was very newly established) needs were also articulated to and through the Advisory Group, either in-session or ad-hoc when significant needs arose warranting urgent attention. An example of an urgent need was highlighted in one case study where newcomer community interviewees described experiencing traumatic losses through fatal accidents which, prompted swift action, initiated through the Advisory Group, to try to prevent similar accidents in the future.

We were able to work together to bring together a subcommittee to look at water safety, and to get action – because people listen to the Advisory Group. (Council)

We collaborated with the Advisory Group about what we could do. I said I was happy to approach the community leaders and ask them what their needs were [and responded appropriately]. (Community Stakeholder)

Establishing the needs of newcomers was very much in focus for the WCPs that have joined through the expansion. In one community, council and community stakeholder interviewees described the considerable effort that was being directed by the council to prepare for the forthcoming arrival of the first cohort of refugees to be settled in the area. A community-wide



workshop brainstormed the services and opportunities available to meet the perceived needs of the anticipated newcomers. The workshop was led by the new WCP coordinator and attended by the Mayor and a wide range of people from community groups.

An innovative initiative through a community group in liaison with WCP and the council's Parks and Cemeteries division was described by several interviewees as an illustration of what is possible when community interests are empowered, through WCP, to engage meaningfully with council. The initiative will allocate and develop an area of a local cemetery specifically for the Muslim community, who had previously travelled several hundred kilometres to the nearest Muslim burial ground. One interviewee noted that this issue had previously been raised with the council but had not gained momentum:

Three years ago, a plot in the cemetery was requested for Muslims to be buried according to the Islamic way. But this was put on hold: there was no one in the council to really push for it. (Newcomer Community Leader)

However, the newly formed local WCP was instrumental in gaining council buy-in for this innovation, which responds to a spiritually significant community need. For interviewees, this demonstrates the influence and goodwill that the WCP has mustered in its short time:

We need to know what they need, and I'm hoping this [the WCP] will be an effective link to engage those communities. ... Nothing is more personal than how people, and their cultural practices, engage with and express an end-of-life process. (Council)

In several case studies, councils and community stakeholder interviewees mentioned some newcomer groups that have limited English, recognising a need for the translation of WCP materials and other council materials. In this regard, a council interviewee reported that materials of the [then] forthcoming local body elections would be translated in 15 languages, as part of the council's effort to address newcomer needs for 'own language' materials and encourage civic participation.

In other councils the varying needs of different migrant workforces were recognised, as some anticipated increasing numbers of migrant workers with the eventual relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions. For example, community stakeholders, council, newcomers, and newcomer community leader interviewees from one community described high numbers of migrants employed in the farming and dairying industries. Meanwhile, two councils experience a seasonal influx of recognised seasonal employees, who have specific needs that are well understood in those communities. Through this understanding about the nature of the newcomer groups within their region, councils are demonstrating that they work with their local communities to establish relationships that help them to understand the needs that exist within their communities.

Adaptation is informed by local needs

WCP Coordinators are engaging with their communities to build relationships and identify how they can effectively adapt programme delivery to best suit their communities. Coordinators discussed how traditional engagement methods, such as surveys, are ineffective in this context. Rather, many Coordinators highlighted the importance of people involved with the programme developing and maintaining relationships with individuals and groups of the



newcomer community: “*migrant communities need to tell the programme what they need*” (Council).

Through the above engagements and relationships, councils and Advisory Groups are driving the adaptation of the WCP. Coordinators identify community leaders amongst newcomer communities to be involved with the Advisory Groups for the programme. For areas with a strong presence of international students or former refugees, councils actively ensure their programme reflects the specific needs of those groups. For example, two of the case study councils sponsor programmes that provide international students with leadership opportunities. In one council, as part of the stocktake, council staff “*talked to lots of international students [and] there was a gap in terms of leadership opportunities for international students*”. As such, the adaption of the WCP has been informed by the needs that exist within local communities and is also informed by local context.

Adaptations sometimes push against programme boundaries

Councils have demonstrated evidence of adapting the development and delivery of the WCP. Some case study councils felt that they had to push back against MBIE/INZ around the perceived standardised/prescriptive nature of the WCP. In each of the instances described, interviewees said that INZ accepted the reasoning of the council and supported the desired adaptations, and national stakeholders supported this viewpoint: “I can’t think of any ideas we’ve said ‘No’ to as part of Welcoming Communities.” Nevertheless, a sense of frustration was evident in the comments of some interviewees, as illustrated in the quotes that follow.

We are asked to do things in a certain way, but is it actually to meet some report or thing in Wellington, when actually what they need to realise is they are burning up a lot of resources that could actually be going into the work on the ground - making a real difference - we don't see the benefit in that, there might be one, but we don't know what it is. (Council)

There's been times when we've pushed back against MBIE/INZ where it doesn't work for us. For example, we were asked to change/do it in a different way – went back to the leadership, said humbly that changing it that way doesn't meet our community-centred aspirations. (Council)

Councils noted the importance of having the programme localised to their area and how this was reflected in the unique needs of their local communities and programme stakeholders.

We appreciate that while there is a general scaffolding, it's been put in different places, that there's been willingness to be a little bit flexible and a little bit agile to account for our own communities and knowing what's important to them. (Council)



KEQ 2.2 To what extent is innovative practice part of the programme implementation?

Interim findings suggest that innovative practice is supported as part of programme implementation.

This question was addressed in case studies with councils involved in the pilot and the expansion of the programme. The analysis was informed by comparisons made between data collected from councils involved at these two stages of the programme.

For the WCP, 'innovation' has been defined as "*new and novel [initiatives] that have worked before [in a WCP] and been shared with others [WCPs]*" (National Stakeholder). As set out in the evaluation plan, the presence of innovative practice in the delivery of the WCP was explored. Specifically, evidence was sought that councils are supported by INZ to develop, test and implement innovation in programme delivery. Secondly, evidence was sought that innovative ideas from stakeholder groups (newcomers, mana whenua, businesses and local residents) were encouraged and that innovative practices contribute to the achievement of programme outcomes and impacts.

INZ supports participating councils to connect and collaborate

During the pilot, regular meetings were hosted in Wellington for WCP Coordinators. Council interviewees from the pilot spoke positively of INZ's facilitation of these meetings, commenting that the hui had enabled knowledge sharing that enabled innovation in programme delivery. Coordinators who had the opportunity to attend these hui spoke highly of them and saw them as a great opportunity to see how other participating councils were attempting innovation. Such hui would be useful especially for newer Coordinators to get ideas and make connections with other member councils. However, these in-person meetings were moved online because of COVID-19 restrictions. During the case study WCP Coordinators were unsure about the future of these meetings.¹⁷ They hoped that INZ would consider how best to provide such opportunities going forward.

There are other forums for the sharing of information and collaboration between councils. National stakeholder interviewees spoke of individual relationships forming between Coordinators that involved information sharing. Coordinators connect to staff at INZ and to other Coordinators through the online service Microsoft Teams and share success stories about the WCP in their areas. INZ and councils also share highlights and stories about WCP with the media. Examples include:

- councils publishing information or resources related to the WCP
- local stakeholders sharing stories about WCP

¹⁷ The first post COVID-19 restrictions meeting took place in late November 2022, in Auckland.



- local and media outlets publishing stories about successful WCP events and activities.

INZ supports participating councils to develop, test and implement innovative practice

Some case study participants and national stakeholders felt that innovative practices were strongly encouraged and supported by INZ. National stakeholders stated that innovation is encouraged by limiting restrictions around delivery of the WCP, with a national stakeholder commenting that they couldn't "*think that any ideas that we have said 'no' to.*" A community stakeholder commented that "*ideas are very welcome and explored. There's not usually an automatic dismissal or 'no that doesn't fit'. There's certainly opportunity.*" These views contrast with those expressed by others, reported above, suggesting that people may have interpreted events differently. That is, where one person considers boundaries to have been in place, another has considered there to be flexibility within the guidance provided by INZ.

Some positive examples of innovative practice described by interviewees are listed below:

- A regular article published in the local newspaper that includes recipes for traditional dishes and the stories behind them from local newcomers.
- The inclusion of a multicultural float in the annual Santa Parade.
- A school holiday activity, where families with young children are given a mock passport to take around the city to learn more about its multinational past and present.
- A collaboration with the local Chamber of Commerce, where young people are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Council interviewees also shared their experiences about attempted innovative practice, in the context of the WCP, where the outcomes were not as expected.

We did a programme where we had recognised in refugee resettlement that people were struggling to get cell phones. We set up a programme with Red Cross and the Library to get donated phones and then pass them on. No one donated their phone, and it ended (Council).

Council and community stakeholder interviewees described how they felt supported to trial innovation and saw benefits in the learning experiences from less successful activities.



Criterion 3 Reach

KEQ 3.1 To what extent is the programme reaching its intended participants/target groups?

Interim findings suggest that the WCP is reaching members of its target groups, but there may be ‘hidden’ pockets of newcomers who are missing out; and there is more work to be done reaching the receiving community.

The reach of the WCP includes three newcomer groups: former refugees, migrants, and international students; and the receiving community. The expected long-term benefit is for the local community to be experienced by all as a welcoming place. The councils that were case studied place most of their efforts on engaging with the newcomer groups, noting that the newcomer demographic in each community can vary. However, to make the community more welcoming, it is also necessary to reach and engage with the receiving community, including the business sector: both are identified in the Welcoming Standard as having a role in making places more welcoming.

Case study participants were asked about the approach and style of WCP Coordinators in rolling out the WCP in their community, including groups reached, communication approach, and communication methods. For the analysis, responses from council-based participants were compared with responses from non-council participants.

The WCP has wide reach, engagement, and representation

In general, council, community stakeholder, newcomer, and newcomer community leader interviewees saw the wide engagement and diverse representation of the WCP as a strength. The programme was said to take a whole of community approach, with great community inclusion, representation, and participation. Interviewees commented that events and initiatives stemming from the WCP can bridge contact with newcomer communities and help local people see value added through strengthening the social fabric and diversity. The grassroots approach to reaching communities was seen as both critical and a strength. A council interviewee listed points that, for them, demonstrated the strength of the WCP:

Strong council support; embedded in council strategy; strong community representation and participation; diversity at the Advisory Group that is well-connected to the sector; and the right people in the room to bring about change (Council).

Advisory Groups are an important way of reaching groups and maintaining connections

Four councils in the case studies have established Advisory Groups, with representatives that include international and/or ethnically based migrant groups, and also faith-based groups.



Refugee needs are brought before some Advisory Groups through Red Cross. For example, Advisory Groups may include a representative from Red Cross, which delivers the refugee resettlement programme during the first two years of settlement. A leader of the Refugee Resettlement Network, which provides former refugees with support and services beyond the two-years of support provided by Red Cross, also sits on an Advisory Group.

In some communities there is youth representation on the Advisory Group, for example through the Global Ambassadors. Engagement with international students has been achieved by some WCPs through student leadership programmes and Youth Councils. At the time of the case studies, councils are keen to get these programmes back into action once COVID-19 restrictions come to an end, when it was hoped that international students would once again come to the region.

Word-of-mouth is very important for communicating about the WCP

Council, community stakeholder, newcomer, and newcomer community leader interviewees felt that word-of-mouth communication and in-person connection is important to reaching the target newcomer groups, especially in situations where English is limited. They agree, also, that the skills and networks forged and maintained by the Coordinators are crucial in this regard. Newcomers described how their local WCP Coordinator made time to meet with people in their homes, at cafes, in their workplaces, to greet them, to find out about their settlement experience, to listen, to invite participation, and to put them in touch with people and organisations that can help them.

Other forms of communication described were online services such as websites, private Facebook groups, WhatsApp, Viber, texting and email groups. Traditional forms of media such as newspapers (especially local publications), local radio stations, mailouts, newsletters and posters were also used. At a council level, the communications described included Mayoral promotions, Communication Plans, Welcoming Packs, a booklet profiling newcomer groups connected to the WCP, including contact details; library displays, and displays in the council foyer. Interviewees had ideas about other places to distribute WCP materials, such as airports, Plunket rooms, educational facilities, and anywhere that young families were likely to visit.

Large-scale festivals reach a range of people, but may not be impacting behaviour and attitudes

Festivals are widely considered to contribute to community reach. Many examples of these were described, including annual large-scale events, regional events,¹⁸ events focusing on food, multicultural performances accompanied by food, and cultural festivals attracting visitors from beyond the community. However, there are some concerns that such events are neither supporting newcomers to integrate into the community, nor influencing the receiving community to be more inclusive in their everyday lives. For instance, one community stakeholder reflected that *“in a festival situation, you’re not actually getting that ‘education’:*

¹⁸ Many events formerly held annually had not been held since 2019, due to COVID-19 restrictions.



you're just getting the 'show-pony' side. So, I don't know if it's changed attitudes". Another comment, from a survey respondent, shows a similar concern:

Small investment in opportunities for social connection and celebration of cultural diversity will not address the fundamental issues that migrants and former refugees face. (Survey respondent, NGO)

However, many newcomer community leaders described the enjoyment their members experience through such festivals, and it seems likely that there are ways and means of building on the festival event to provide greater opportunities for learning and cross-cultural engagement.

It can be hard to reach 'hidden' newcomers

Newcomers who are not within the existing network that connects to the WCP may be missing out. One WCP has run events specifically to attract such newcomers, including an expo, sports tournament, and an Information Hub, but these have not been as successful as hoped, despite good promotion and giveaways. This experience was summed up by a newcomer in another region who noted that *"the big hurdle was finding out about it [the WCP] in the first place"* (Newcomer Community Leader).

Attempting to address this hurdle, council interviewees and newcomer community leaders described plans to distribute WCP materials such as 'Welcome Packs' through places such as preschools and schools, libraries, the Citizens Advice Bureau, and NGOs, as well as through ethnic communities and other community spaces and places that have a general or receiving community focus.

Slightly over half of the survey respondents (37/65) considered that community awareness of the programme was not good.

Receiving communities need to be more engaged with the WCP to increase social inclusion and reduce racism

Council, community stakeholder, newcomer, and newcomer community leader interviewees commented that more work is needed to bring the receiving communities on board, including local employers. This point was made in relation to WCPs at all stages of implementation, but it was prompted by different situations in different case studies. Examples included public back-lash against the pending arrival of the first cohort of refugees, described by council, community stakeholder, newcomer, and newcomer community leader interviewees; and experiences of racism described by council, community stakeholder, newcomer, and newcomer community leader interviewees in two regions. Council interviewees from all case studies commented that their receiving communities might not be as engaged as anticipated through the WC Standard. One approach to overcoming this was to increase engagement and awareness using community-based services and employers as distribution points for Welcoming Packs, and by encouraging third parties to include the Welcoming Communities banner and logo on their materials, such as when advertising events and activities.



The *Welcoming Week* initiative is a national annual campaign that targets the receiving community. Just one Coordinator spoke of this, describing it as an intentional means of engaging with and influencing the receiving community:

[The target audience of our Welcoming Week] is not really for newcomers [directly]: it's for [the wider community] people who don't work in this space: like 'preaching to the unconverted': telling people why they should be intentionally inclusive; telling people about who lives in their community. ... In terms of communicating about the reasons for the programme, such as anti-racism, changing hearts and minds, we put a lot of effort into Welcoming Week (Council).

Efforts are being made to increase business sector engagement

Some councils consider that businesses could benefit from greater connection to the programme, and especially those that are owned by newcomers. They have attempted to make a step in this direction by including a business representative in their Advisory Group. A desire for a closer connection to council, in the hope that this will result in better information-sharing, is driving their participation. The Advisory Group in one council from the case study included a business representative. They were invited to be part of the Advisory Group because of their well-developed induction process for newcomer employees.

Word-of-mouth communications have been useful for engaging with employers and prospective employers. For example, in a community where many migrants live on farms, it is important that the employing farmer knows about and can help migrant families to connect with the WCP.

Although the banking and finance sector is beyond the scope of the WCP, banks received some critique from newcomers. There are language barriers and differences in bureaucratic requirements that can leave newcomers feeling that they are being subjected to discrimination and that they are not trusted. WCPs may be able to assist newcomers by connecting them with services that can help them to make effective use of the banking sector.

Also see Criterion 1 *Partners*.

Further work was suggested to enable greater reach and outreach, buy-in, and representation

Council, community stakeholder, newcomer, and newcomer community leader interviewees identified a need to gain more support and buy-in from the receiving community; to increase thought as to how to influence the broader community and get them on board; to spread awareness about the programme/things that are going on; and to retain engagement with the receiving community. It was suggested that this could be done through greater investment in marketing and community outreach and by increasing the capacity of staff.

The need to re-connect people, decrease isolation, regain momentum and get the community advocating for the WCP after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted was highlighted through case study interviews, especially by council interviewees. Further, resuming initiatives such as welcoming sessions and workshops were considered to be important to help regain the



momentum of the WCP. One council interviewee suggested that the Welcoming Plan needs to be re-considered in a post-lockdown context, that is, given the impact of separation on families due to COVID-19. Another council interviewee considered that one of the impacts of COVID-19 was increased racism, and suggested that the WCP can help re-connect the community:

[I] can't underestimate how much COVID-19 has impacted. [...] But we've got to get our own community back into being a community. We have people still isolated/locked down, who don't feel safe to come out. I think Welcoming Communities can get them back, for our existing communities. (Council)

The importance of reaching newcomers soon after their arrival was stressed by council interviewees and community stakeholders. They emphasised the need to prevent people from feeling isolated; to assist them to find meaningful employment, including improving their English, and to connect newcomers to local community leaders and groups. The challenge of how to identify newcomers when they arrive was noted, and people suggested that information packs for migrant families should be available in multiple places throughout the community including schools and other services used by young families, as well as places of worship, community centres and the Citizens Advice Bureau.



Criterion 4 Outcomes

Desired outcomes are well-aligned with WCP aims

In addition to and prior to the KEQs discussed below, interviewees were asked about their desired outcomes for the programme. Major themes were connection, an improved experience for newcomers, and increased understanding of diverse cultures. Community stakeholders commented that the WCP should enable people to readily form connections with others from their own culture, and with groups from different cultures. By feeling more supported and connected, newcomers may settle and stay, rather than move to other places. Council interviewees and community stakeholders commented that cross-cultural understanding and the celebration of cultural diversity was a way for everyone, including newcomers, the receiving community, and the business sector, to make communities more inclusive and therefore stronger.

KEQ 4.1 To what extent have the overarching outcomes of the Welcoming Communities Standard been achieved?

Interim findings suggest there has been progress in achieving these outcomes, with the extent of progress being aligned to the maturity of the programme.

A summary finding is provided for each intended outcomes of the eight elements of the Welcoming Communities Standard, with examples that illustrate areas that could be strengthened.

1. Inclusive Leadership

Intended Outcome: *Local government, tangata whenua and other community leaders work together to create, advocate for and continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive community. They lead a shared plan to increase connections between newcomers and existing residents.*

Advisory Groups are working well, but could be enhanced through greater involvement of mana whenua

Case study interviewees mostly felt this outcome to be advancing well, through effective leadership of and by the Advisory Group.

The Advisory Group has been put together really well: it's a lovely broad spectrum; all those reps are there. (Newcomer Community Leader)

They are providing a platform for people to connect, through the highly visible Coordinator, connecting people. (Council)



Inclusive leadership is what the Advisory Group is all about. Diversity in representatives, including iwi, youth, council representatives, government departments and so forth. (Newcomer Community Leader)

From the survey, 44/65 (67.7%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that councils are providing strong leadership for the WCP; and 48/65 (73.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that the councils are working well with other organisations to deliver the WCP.

However, there was frequent comment that tangata whenua may be less engaged than is implied through the 'desired outcome' statement in the WC Standard. In some communities, interviewees described insufficient engagement, contested understandings and aspirations over roles, tensions between council and iwi, and tension between rūnanga:

Tangata whenua were consulted at the start, offering a seat [at the Advisory Group], but don't want to be engaged in an on-going basis: seldom come to the Advisory Group, but they did get a mention in the Plan, and they lead the Welcoming Session [powhiri]. (Council)

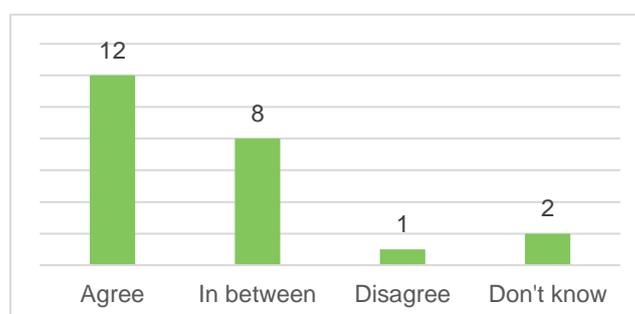
There is never enough engagement with the rūnanga, which need to be addressed ... there is a lack of trust in the relationship between iwi and council. (Community Stakeholder)

There is an issue with resourcing around the role that iwi wants to play: ... iwi wants to have a larger role, delivering the programme. (Council)

Newcomers mostly agree that there is inclusive leadership

From the case study activity with newcomers, most agreed that council, Māori, and community leaders were working together to make their community a welcoming place. Powhiri were an example that illustrated inclusive leadership to newcomers.

Figure 6: Newcomers from Gore (n=10) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if they felt their local council, local Māori (tangata whenua) and community leaders work together to make their community a welcoming place.



2. Welcoming Communications

Intended Outcome: People of all cultures and backgrounds feel included, listened to and well informed through a range of ways that take into account their different communication needs.



The importance of word-of-mouth communication has been discussed (see KEQ 3.1), and the WCPs describe using a wide range of media to communicate with the receiving community, such as local radio and community newspapers (such as *Mountain Scene* and *Horowhenua Chronical*). Interviewees emphasised that there is a need to communicate through a wide range of communication modes, mainly because of language barriers.

English language is a communication barrier for many

A lack of local translation services has hindered some Coordinators who seek to provide multi-lingual information. To address this issue, one Coordinator advised that their council was in the process of joining MBIE's Language Assistance programme. But this is not a problem unique to the WCP: a council communications officer advised that their council struggles to communicate effectively with many of its audiences, despite any language barrier. For councils, the costs and logistical difficulties of having multi-language websites has meant it has not been viable to provide such a service.

The other side of this outcome is for newcomers to feel 'listened to', and once again, interviewees commented that this can be especially difficult where there is a language barrier. However, the representation of newcomer community groups in Advisory Groups has gone some way to addressing this issue.

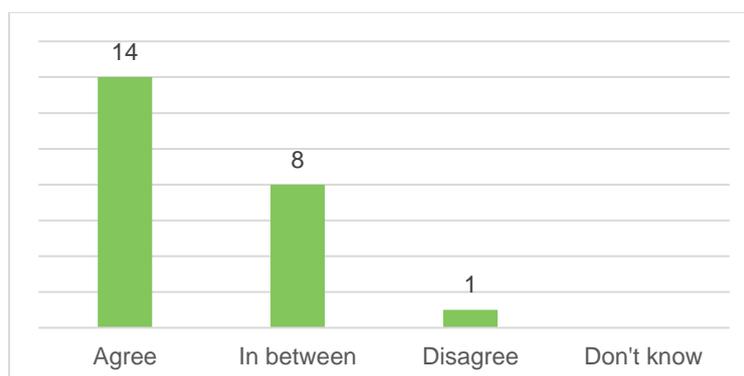
Welcome Packs were considered an important means of providing welcoming communications

In councils where Welcoming Packs were under development, consideration was being given to how to keep them up to date, relevant and how and where to distribute them, so that no newcomer was overlooked. One case study council has produced a booklet that gives a profile of newcomer groups, including Māori and Pacifica. This resource, which is available online as well as in hard copy, showcases the cultural diversity of the community, with snap-shot information introducing roughly 25 ethnic and faith-based community groups in the region. This resource was very well received by community groups who were delighted to be included in the booklet and saw this as a good way to reach other people from their communities and to foster inter-group connections and collaborations.



Newcomers mostly agree that communications are welcoming

Figure 7: Newcomers from Gore (n=10) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if communications about activities are easy to understand and helped them to feel included in their community.



3. Equitable Access

Intended Outcome: Opportunities to access services and activities and to participate in the community are available to all, including newcomers.

Improved equitable access was described

Several positive examples were given as evidence of increasingly equitable access, such as the introduction of Multicultural Council Community Connectors and Community Navigators, who help families settle; the introduction of First Language classes, so that the children of newcomers can learn their parent's language; driving lessons, which result in greatly reduced isolation; and other initiatives that generally help newcomers feel that they are part of the community.

In a community where the first cohort of refugees were soon to arrive, an interviewee described inequity as the result of disempowerment due to differences in the education, length of time in place, community leadership, untreated trauma, low self-confidence, and lack of knowledge of 'who to ask'. Their concerns for addressing inequity through the WCP were summed up:

For those who are empowered, it is easier to navigate the system; for those who are struggling, no. They face many barriers and feel disempowered. How is the WCP going to address this disempowerment amongst these communities? (Government Agency)

A Mayor commented that inequitable access to services and support is an issue for MSD and central government: it is not the job of the council and WCP to address such issues. Further to this, several examples were described by interviewees, especially newcomers, to illustrate their experience of inequitable access to services. Notably, the examples identified are broad issues, including challenges in accessing primary health care, mental health services and income support, and are beyond the scope of the WCP. Systemic barriers to health care and income support negatively impact newcomers' experience of living in Aotearoa New Zealand, making them feel unwelcome. WCPs may be able to help reduce this impact through

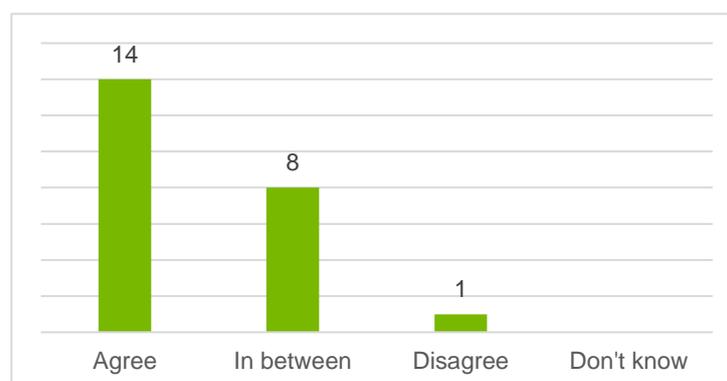


awareness and the development of networks and navigation pathways that help ensure newcomers are receiving any entitlements they are due.

Newcomers had mixed experiences of equity

Newcomers in the case studies mostly agreed that they had easy access to services, but this was not universal.

Figure 8: Newcomers from Gore (n=10) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if they have easy access to the services that they need, and they feel welcome to take part in any community activity that they choose.



4. Connected and Inclusive Communities

Intended Outcome: People feel safe in their identity and that they are connected with and belong in the community. There are high levels of trust and understanding between members of the receiving community and newcomers.

WCPs are making their communities more connected and inclusive, but there is still work to be done

People from all case studies gave examples of how the WCP is making their community more welcoming. One example illustrates many comments:

Although we are different, we feel safe and accepted. We have [people] here who have never been treated badly. Even wearing cultural dress, [there is] no issue. I think people are accepting here. I am happy to be living [here].
(Newcomer Community Leader)

Nevertheless, interviewees highlighted instances of low connection and poor inclusion, including some that are directly opposite to the above experience:

[At a workshop with 50-60 newcomers] we heard experiences about newcomers in the area and their struggles. ... we found out about different treatment in jobs in the region. (Community Stakeholder)



*There is a level of bias out there. If they see someone walking around in hijab.... I remember watching three females walking down the street and seeing people visibly cross to the other side of the road to avoid them.
(Community Stakeholder)*

Other examples (included below), suggest there is still work to be done to make communities connected and inclusive:

- In two case studies, newcomers described instances of being treated differently to other employees, especially in relation to promotion at work. Workplace bullying of newcomers by their employers was also described, and it was commented that newcomers are sometimes unaware that such behaviour is not tolerated in Aotearoa New Zealand, and that support should be available to them.
- In some places, people referred to a 'small-town mentality', where people within receiving communities have formed cliques with (often) life-long friends and are not open to newcomers. This makes it hard for newcomers to form deeper connections with people within the receiving community.
- Some migrants in one council appear reluctant to connect with people who are not from their homeland. This was considered by council interviewees to be due to language differences and was especially evident amongst older migrants who had arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand as refugees quite some time ago. However, in another council a participant described their observation that, within schools, international students tend to cluster rather than integrate with the wider student population.

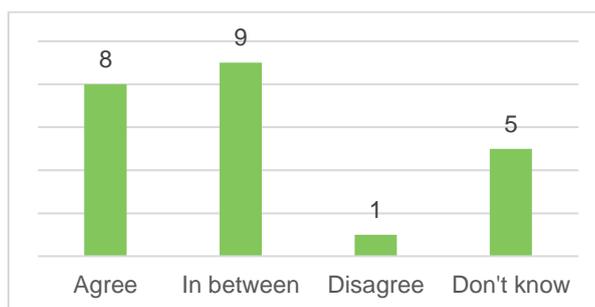
Newcomers have mixed experiences of their community as connected and inclusive

Amongst newcomers who participated in the case studies, there was less agreement on this point. Notably, the five people who selected 'don't know' advised that they felt they could not always trust in what they had been told by Government and non-government organisations. Their experience of loss of trust meant they felt unsure that there was mutual trust between themselves and the community.

Newcomers described situations in which they felt 'talked down to', such as when making inquiries about enrolling for swimming lessons at a community swimming pool; another changed their GP after repeated intimidation by the receptionist; and two newcomers described experiences of racism when interacting with banks.



Figure 9: Newcomers from Gore (n=10) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if they feel their community accepts and respects their identity and there is mutual trust.



5. Economic Development

Intended Outcome: Communities maximise and harness the economic development opportunities that newcomers can offer. Councils work with business associations to promote the contribution that newcomer business owners and skilled migrants make to the region's economy.

A complex interplay limits the possibilities for many newcomers to maximise their contribution to economic development

While there is general agreement that newcomers contribute to the local economy, there is also concern that many newcomers cannot use qualifications attained from their homelands in Aotearoa New Zealand. Thus, highly skilled people can be employed in low-skilled work.¹⁹ Community stakeholders, councils, newcomer community leaders, and newcomers all stated that difficulties with English language can also play a part in this. To this end, a newcomer community leader described a programme organised by Rotary in conjunction with Victoria University of Wellington and MSD. The programme provided newcomer professionals with English language experience and job interview skills. This idea was replicated elsewhere, and the newcomer community leader hoped that it will be a regular event, and perhaps an innovation in which their WCP might become involved.

Another barrier is the need for a driver licence, which can limit the types of jobs people can apply for. A newcomer described how they were a qualified digger operator in their home country but cannot do equivalent work in Aotearoa New Zealand without a local driver licence, which they considered requires competence in the English language.

WCPs have, directly and indirectly, worked with local Chambers of Commerce and other similar organisations to host job-seeker events, and a council has sponsored the *Welcoming Communities Inclusive Business Award* as part of their regional annual Business Awards.

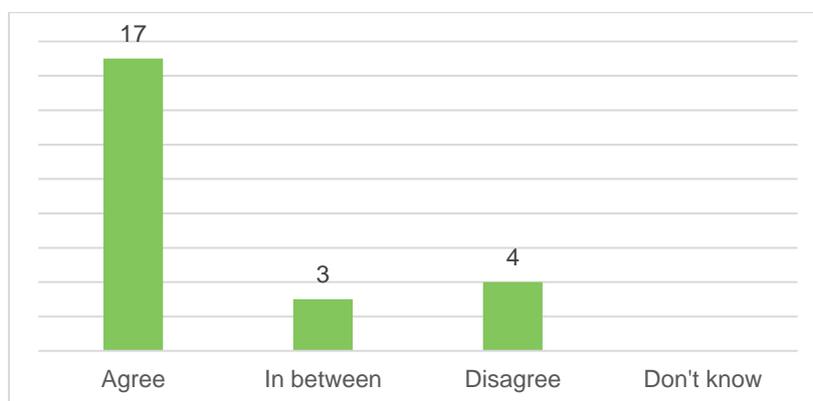
¹⁹ INZ has advised that recent changes in the immigration policy mean that new migrants are usually in roles that match the skills they bring.



Newcomers generally consider they can contribute economically to their communities

Despite these comments, most of the newcomers we met with considered that they were able to fully contribute to the economic life of their community.

Figure 10: Newcomers from Gore (n=11) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if they felt able to fully contribute to the economic life of their region.



6. Civic Engagement

Intended Outcome: *Newcomers feel welcome to fully participate in the community. Newcomers are active in all forms of civic participation.*

Intentional activities are underway to promote civic participation

With local body elections on the horizon at the time of the case studies, interviewees from several councils described efforts to assist newcomers to understand and participate in the election process and learning how to cast a vote, through translated materials.

Because some of our refugees have never had a chance to have a say in their local government system, having a voice is really important for them and they really do want to have a voice in that engagement process.... We see this as a part of good integration that they feel that they take ownership of being a Kiwi, they think 'I am a Kiwi now and I can actually have a say in what I want to see for the country'. (Community Stakeholder)

We do 15 languages for our election materials. That has been really well received. (Council)

In several case studies, participants proudly described the current make-up of employees in their council, noting the number of migrants and former refugees.

An elected councillor in a region where the WCP is well-established described their experience of people from different ethnic backgrounds contributing the council's Long-Term Plan, to good effect:



For the first time ever, we had groups from different ethnic backgrounds come to submit to council on the Long-Term Plan. We had a Chinese community come in, Brazilian, Pasifika. I can't remember this ever happening in the past – they just didn't engage. To me that was a good sign that communities are feeling braver. They were clear that their kids were suffering in schools and being discriminated against. Contributed to Welcoming Schools Coordinator being established. That's a recent positive, it wasn't happening at the start. (Council)

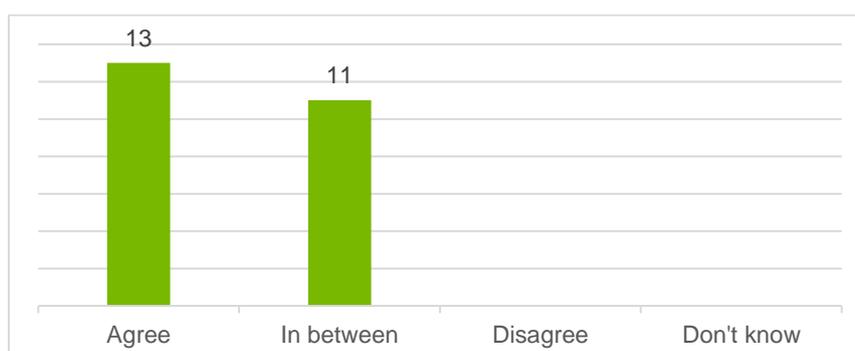
Civic engagement was evident in one community when the WCP hosted a community consultation hui in the weeks prior to the case study. As described above, hui attendees who also participated in the case study were delighted at the level of engagement from a very broad range of people from across the region. Reflecting on the hui and the impact the newly formed WCP was having for civic engagement, one newcomer community leader said the WCP is “*pushing the council to work harder. Now we have access to give feedback more directly to council*”.

A forum of ethnic communities, “*that would not have happened if Welcoming Communities was not there*” (Newcomer Community Leader), was established to meet with the WCP Coordinator or multicultural organisations. The forum members were invited via WCP representatives to be part of a consultation about the city development. In that same community, the WCP arranged a workshop which aimed to demystify how council makes decisions about funding. From the point of view of the participant, this generated a lot of interest and resulted in conversations about resource consenting, events, and dog management, because people felt they had access to a knowledgeable person that they could trust. Similarly, interviewees from another council described how, prior to COVID restrictions, there had been an annual *Meet and Greet* with the Mayor, giving newcomers an opportunity to ask questions of the Mayor about council processes.

Newcomers feel at least somewhat able to contribute to community life

Newcomers generally seemed positive about this outcome, with no one disagreeing, but roughly half did not fully agree.

Figure 11: Newcomers from Gore (n=11) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if they felt welcome to contribute to all forms of community life in their region.





7. Welcoming Public Spaces

Intended Outcome: *Newcomers and receiving communities feel welcome in and comfortable using public spaces.*

Public spaces are mostly places where newcomers feel welcome, but negative interactions with council service staff at public spaces have occurred

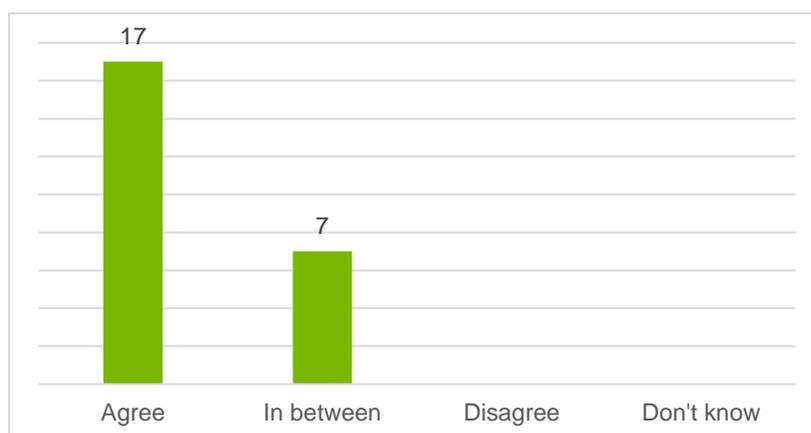
Case studies highlighted numerous initiatives that have aimed to positively reinforce inclusivity. Examples included initiatives such as displays in libraries and walk-ways in public spaces, some of which were intended as temporary features and have become permanent.

However, these positive initiatives contrast with unpleasant experiences described by some newcomer community leaders of individuals and family groups when using public places, such as parks and at a public swimming pool – an experience through which service staff demonstrated low cultural competency, resulted in a newcomer being offended and feeling belittled.

Most newcomers felt confident to use public places

Nevertheless, there was high agreement amongst newcomers that they felt confident in using public places and spaces within their community.

Figure 12: Newcomers from Gore (n=11) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if they felt confident in using the public places and spaces within their community.



8. Culture and Identity

Intended Outcome: *There is a shared sense of pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant community. People feel their culture is respected and valued by other members of the community. There are opportunities to learn about each other's cultures.*

There are many examples of events that demonstrate cultural richness and contribute to the sense of pride of newcomers

Case study interviewees described large-scale and small-scale cultural experiences, often centred around food, as examples of shared pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant



community. Attendance at such events was described by most participants as being a reasonably even mix of newcomers and receiving community, but some were more dubious:

I don't know that the average local person attends ... most people that attend are new migrants. We see people from lots of other cultures, but I'm not so likely to see my neighbour. (Newcomer Community Leader)

One council has a diverse events calendar, with events described as “colourful, fun, active, family celebrations. People can connect over those things – family fun, food, performances” (Council).

People in councils that have joined through the expansion anticipate a similar calendar of events as their local WCP develops, and a multi-cultural event was being planned at the time of one case study. For example, a Diwali celebration that started several years ago as a potluck dinner at someone's home has out-grown two larger venues with 200 people attending, before moving to a venue that catered for 1,500 attendees. Discussing that growth, a council interviewee commented:

The event started small and has grown significantly because they have the support and feel comfortable and reinforced [which] gives them the confidence to be proud of who they are and to celebrate that. (Council)

A WCP is credited as being a significant change agent in this respect:

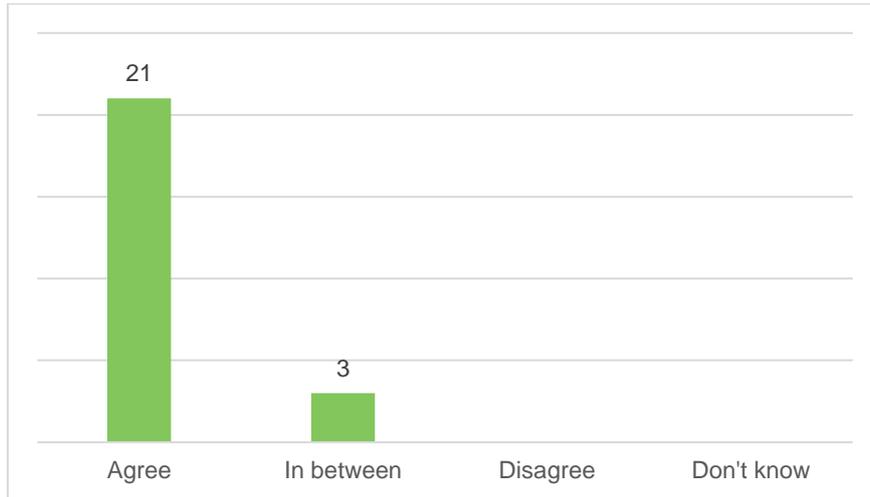
Significant change there - recognising vibrancy and diversity, respecting the differences and applauding the benefits. There was Indian cultural day in [place] and there were over 2000 people there. People were on the streets welcoming people. I think there's been a significant change in [place] and [place]. (Council)

Newcomers enjoy sharing their culture with others

Newcomers generally agreed that they can share their culture with others and have others share their culture in return, with only three people not in full agreement.



Figure 13: Newcomers from Gore (n=11) and Palmerston North (n=13) were asked if they were able to proudly share their culture with others, and have others share their culture with them.





KEQ 4.2 To what extent have the overarching outcomes described in the Intervention Logic been achieved?

Interim findings suggest that progress towards enablers and short- and medium-term intended outcomes is commensurate with the length of time the WCP has been implemented, with all case studies describing progress toward at least some intended outcomes.

This KEQ was not fully explored with many case study participants. It was intended to be explored but often there was not enough time in interviews to cover all outcomes across the Intervention Logic (IL) and WC Standard. In these instances, a more fulsome discussion about the intended outcomes from the WC Standard was prioritised.

Enablers

The IL identifies nine 'enablers' of outcomes. Two enablers were explored in the activity with eight newcomers across two member councils. Newcomers mostly agreed, at least to some extent, that:

- they enjoyed a strong relationship with the council
- activities for newcomers were well organised.

Newcomers noted that there had been few activities since 2019 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Amongst newer WCPs, there was general agreement that, as is to be expected, there is 'work to be done' on all or most of the enablers, whilst pilot WCPs often considered they had made good progress or were 'beyond' the 'enabler'.

Short-term Outcomes

The IL includes seven short-term outcomes. Five intended short-term outcomes were explored in the activity with eight newcomers across two member councils. Newcomers mostly agreed, at least to some extent, that:

- people in their community are positive, pleasant and encouraging
- they have a feeling of belonging in their community
- their culture and background do not prevent them from feeling that they belong, are listened to, and that they are well-informed about their community

For example, the young son of a newcomer family was invited to attend a birthday party sleep-over during Ramadan. The host family was very accommodating of the fasting requirements and incorporated this seamlessly into the party plans. (Newcomer Community Leader)



However, there was more ambivalence, with mixed results, concerning:

- awareness by newcomers of services and entitlements that are often taken for granted by the receiving community
- newcomers feeling confident to report experiences of biased or unfair behaviour and being confident that these would be appropriately addressed.

Amongst newer WCPs, some could provide examples of progress toward at least some of the short-term outcomes.²⁰

Medium-term Outcomes

The IL includes eight medium-term outcomes. Four intended medium-term outcomes were explored in the activity with eight newcomers across two member councils (Outcomes 3, 5, 6, and 8). Newcomers from WCPs established during the pilot mostly agreed, at least to some extent, that:

- they can use their skills and abilities in their employment, volunteering and other activities, although newcomers also described experiences that led them to conclude that some employers prefer to employ New Zealanders: “*they prefer kiwis*” (Newcomer Community Leader)
- they can participate in civic life to the extent they wish. However, several newcomers commented that their limited English inhibits their participation
- the place where they live thrives on diversity and is culturally vibrant
- others treat them as a full member of their community and the diversity they bring is valued.

Amongst pilot WCPs, evaluation participants generally reported that there is progress toward these outcomes, noting that these outcomes sometimes relate to increasingly complex issues that require societal change beyond the remit of the WCP. For example, talking about newcomers having opportunities to apply their skills and abilities in employment, volunteering and other activities, one participant stated, “*this is a big issue: there is not one solution for this one!*” (Council).

²⁰ Short-term outcomes were not addressed with pilot WCPs.



KEQ 4.3 For whom, to what extent, and in what circumstances have these outcomes been achieved?

From the first of three data collection cycles it seems that newcomers living in communities

Interim findings suggest that progress toward outcomes requires effective sustained implementation, and a skilled WCP Coordinator who has sufficient capacity for the work.

with more established WCPs may be benefitting from effective, sustained implementation, albeit interrupted by COVID-19 restrictions. Having a Coordinator who has appropriate skills and attributes, who is in the role for an extended amount of time, who has widespread support of the council, and especially the Mayor, and who has sufficient time allocated to work on the programme, is an advantage to newcomers and to the community. It seems likely that WCPs joining through the expansion will achieve similar results over time, assuming their Coordinator is appropriately skilled and supported.



KEQ 4.4 What unanticipated outcomes has the programme contributed to?

Unanticipated outcomes have been mostly positive

Support for newcomers during COVID-19 pandemic

In communities where the WCP was already established, the WCP networks served the communities well during the COVID-19 restrictions.

[Advisory Group networks] had a lot of positive ripple effects over time in a lot of areas. One of the obvious ones was relationship through lockdown: we knew exactly who to talk to. (Council)

The depth of the relationships in the WCP: during COVID we used [those] in ways we never necessarily planned: there were a number of factors that could have been a lot worse. (Government Agency)

While we were in COVID, and people had parents passing away and they wanted to go home and borders were closed, they came to us and asked us to talk to Immigration. We went to them [Immigration] and asked for support, and they gave us guides to give the community. So, the community knew we had direct connections with the government - could help resolve problems. Most of them know if they have issues, they can come to the WCP to get help. (Newcomer Community Leader)

Other examples are that of a trusted WCP Coordinator who assisted Muslim women to get vaccinated in culturally acceptable circumstances and the practical assistance given to temporary migrants who were unable to return home during COVID and were unprepared for the cold of winter:

People [temporary migrants] were here for spring and summer but were kept here for the winter. We had a drive for jerseys, blankets, beanies - so these people got through the winter, clothed appropriately. (Council)

In one council the WCP networks were called into action when a family's house began flooding during lockdown - appropriate services were quickly activated. In a different region, a newcomer family had a housefire:

There were three agencies who knew each other and have connected through the Advisory Group, and they were able to respond and wrap around the family within days and give them what they needed. (Council)



Beyond COVID-19 restrictions experiences, interviewees considered that their Advisory Group has developed trusting relationships between NZ Police and newcomer communities from places where such authorities could not be relied on to protect people and property or where there was low trust of the state.

When newcomers from the refugee community suffered a fatal accident, which appeared to have been exacerbated by their inexperience with the natural environment of Aotearoa New Zealand, the WCP Coordinator and Advisory Group members worked with Red Cross and another local agency to reduce the chances of other newcomers suffering the same experience. Interviewees stressed that action was hastened because the WCP Coordinator and Advisory Group members are taken seriously by the council.

Some WCP Coordinators are occasionally assisting newcomer groups to establish bank accounts or to get charitable trust status.

A councillor from a community where the WCP was established during the pilot described the situation in 2019 when the Christchurch Mosque shootings occurred:

When we had the Mosque shootings, we already had good relationships with the communities, and they had good relationships with the Police. People knew who to turn to: the relationships were already there. Straight away we could link in with leaders of the Muslim community. We looked at what we could do to help. People were calling me asking for news within 20 minutes of the shooting. People already knew who to contact and those links were already there. You never expect this type of situation, but nonetheless, it was an unintended but positive. (Council)

However, in two councils some interviewees expressed their view that the council, through WCP, 'favoured' some community groups, establishing stronger 'go to' relationships for certain services. These perceptions have had a detrimental effect on similar community organisations that feel they have been overlooked for funding and opportunities to develop their services.



Criterion 5 Learning and Improvement

KEQ 5.1 What are the barriers and enablers to successful programme delivery for Immigration New Zealand and the councils new to the programme and the longer-standing councils involved in the pilot?

Some important barriers have been identified

The data suggest that some councils may be creating a barrier to the successful delivery of the WCP by allocating insufficient hours to WCP coordination and/or by delaying integration of the WCP in the Council's strategic plans. If the benefits of the WCP are to be realised to their fullest extent, sufficient coordination effort is necessary to do the job effectively and without detrimental effects for the wellbeing of the coordinator. The programme needs to become well-embedded in the everyday practises of the council.

There are barriers to engagement with mana whenua, with the evaluation finding that some councils did not appear to have partnered with mana whenua to the extent described in the WC Standard. Four barriers relating to this are described earlier, but briefly these relate to:

- competing viewpoints from multiple iwi groups
- a history of troubled relations between the council and mana whenua
- differing views on which organising should spearhead the WCP
- slow resumption of relationships post COVID-19.

There are barriers to engagement with the business sector, with the case studied WCPs not appearing to have created enduring relationships of a nature described in the Welcoming Standard.

The receiving community does not seem to be as engaged with the WCP as is envisaged in the WC Standard. This is a barrier to achieving intended outcomes of the programme, such as for element four, *Connected and Inclusive Communities*. Element four aims for an outcome where relationships are built between newcomers and members of the receiving community, and there is a sense of ease in connecting with and learning from each other.

For councils with a large geographical spread, the process of developing a Welcoming Plan for the community has been described by council interviewees as “challenging”. is challenging. For example, despite weekly visits by a Coordinator to one of the largest towns, the relationships and connections are well behind compared with relationships that have been established in the main centre: “*How am I going to identify champions [there] that will lead Welcoming Communities? ... [We need] people to help us build a network ... and get buy-in.*” (Council)

It was noted that the templates used to assist councils to set up their WCP may benefit from a refresh. National stakeholders and people involved in developing the expression of interest and/or programme establishment considered that while the original templates were useful for



setting up WCPs in the pilot, templates that are less specific to the Aotearoa New Zealand context may be a barrier to effective implementation. This argument was also extended to the two WC resources, the WC Standard and Putting out the Welcoming Mat.

Some important enablers have been addressed in Criterion 1-4

Employing a WCP Coordinator with the right skills mix is an important enabler of the WCP. Coupled with this, the WCP is enabled by the Coordinator being sufficiently resourced and having sufficient time allocated to do the job well.

Programme reach is considerably enabled by the composition and collaborative nature of the Advisory Group. The inclusion of a local INZ Relationship Manager at Advisory Group level has been identified as an enabler of successful delivery of the WCP. Their inclusion may be a positive step toward ameliorating barriers experienced by some newcomers who are nervous about engaging with government agency officials.

The support provided by INZ officers to WCP Coordinators, especially in the programme establishment period, enables WCPs to get set up on a solid footing. INZ support is greatly valued by Coordinators who note that the structure of the programme is useful, and the resources provided, and contacts made through INZ are enablers of success.

Having the WCP being driven by a government agency, and implemented at a local level, was considered an enabler:

It's a nationally driven organisation that is inclusive of the regions. When you're trying to get commitment and agreement, it needs to be driven from the top and delivered from the bottom. It's important to have that group in place. ... Locally, the implementation - you have to have the local input as well in the strategy being driven from the top. If the Government says, "Here it is, go deliver it", you're not going to get the buy-in. But if you've had good investment of those communities, they will want to get it done. (Council)

The WCP is generally endorsed as a valuable initiative

Interviewees from newly joined councils viewed the existence, the potential, and the holistic nature of the programme as a strength, noting that there was nothing similar previously in its place. For pilot WCPs, the development of the programme over time and learnings gained (for example, regarding how to recognise and respond to needs) were considered a strength, noting that the programme has developed its own momentum (rather than being entirely driven by the WCP Coordinator).

A strength of the programme identified by councils and national stakeholders is its ability to get councils talking about their ethnic communities and creating space for inclusion and diversity. The programme was generally endorsed and spoken of highly, for example a Mayor commented "*It's a great programme. I think if every city could do itit brings people together... the programme has real benefits ... it really joins the dots!*"



Commitment, enthusiasm, and collaboration are core strengths of the WCP

One of the core strengths of the WCP was said to be the enthusiasm, commitment, passion, and buy-in of those involved, including (where applicable) the strong migrant community (who were said by a council interviewee to demonstrate natural leadership). The cohesiveness of shared commitment to the programme and to welcoming newcomers to Aotearoa New Zealand more generally (with welcoming considered a strength in and of itself) was mentioned by many interviewees. The WCP provides a collaborative platform for individuals and organisations working towards the same purpose, with the shared desire to help newcomers feel at home. WCP Coordinators were seen as connectors and were spoken of highly by all those involved in the WCP. This has been explored in detail in Criterion 1 Coordinators.

Collaboration and networking were frequently referred to as strengths that developed out of the programme. It was often commented the WCP has led to relationship building, networking, and the gathering and exchanging of information. The WCP is reported to have generated links between individuals and organisations, meaning that people know who to contact and refer to when individuals or communities need support. Networking and relationships facilitate ease of information flow to support newcomers.

Further, the support from councils and being a council-based programme was considered a strength. The council foundation of the WCP provides a central touchpoint for organisations and ethnic communities and groups, facilitating collaborative community-led initiatives (rather than being entirely driven by council).



KEQ 5.2 What changes could be made to enhance the effectiveness of the programme?

Recommendations

The evaluators have collaborated with MBIE and INZ to develop the following recommendations:

1. Māori engagement

WE RECOMMEND that MBIE/INZ work alongside councils and Māori, creating reciprocal relationships and genuine partnership, to contribute to building Welcoming Communities.

2. Receiving Communities

WE RECOMMEND that the Welcoming Communities Programme continue to identify opportunities to engage with receiving communities.

3. Business Sector

WE RECOMMEND that councils identify opportunities to engage with the business sector, to promote the contribution that newcomers make to the region's economy.

4. Council Capacity

WE RECOMMEND that MBIE/INZ continue to ensure councils have realistic expectations about the effort and resource inputs required from the onset of the Programme in order to implement, sustain, and maximise the benefits of WCP.

5. Welcoming Standard

WE RECOMMEND that the *Welcoming Standard* outcomes be reviewed to ensure they meet the current needs and aspirations of councils and the community. It is important that the outcomes are guided by Te Tiriti principles and worded in plain English.

6. Welcoming Mat

WE RECOMMEND that the *Putting out the Welcoming Mat* be reviewed and revised to reflect the way the programme is implemented in Aotearoa New Zealand, with current, relevant examples and case studies.

7. Accreditation

WE RECOMMEND that the process of gaining Accreditation be simplified, recognising that the effort required by the Coordinator to prepare the application is effort that is not available for the actual mahi of the programme.



KEQ 5.3 What supports the sustainability of the programme?

The sustainability of the WCP at the local level appears to be supported by the extent to which it is embedded into the strategy and plans of the host council.

Council decisions around the ongoing funding of the WCP, including its commitment on the hours allocated to the Coordinator for their WCP work, are important to WCP sustainability.

Employing a WCP Coordinator with the right skills mix supports WCP sustainability.

Being able to demonstrate the positive effects from the WCP to councils and to Government will support its sustainability.



Appendix A: Data Collection Tools

Various information sheets/informed consent forms and interview guides were developed and tailored according to the role of the interviewee, and the implementation stage (case studies only). These are embedded below.

National Stakeholder Interviews:



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onsent.docx



Note Taking
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Coordinator Focus Groups:



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Case Studies:

Council personnel and Advisory Group Members



Information Sheet
and Consent Form -



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Coordinators:



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Regional Stakeholders:



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Information Sheet
and Consent Form -

Newcomer Community Leaders:



Information Sheet
and Consent Form -



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Information Sheet
and Consent Form -



Appendix B: Survey Instrument

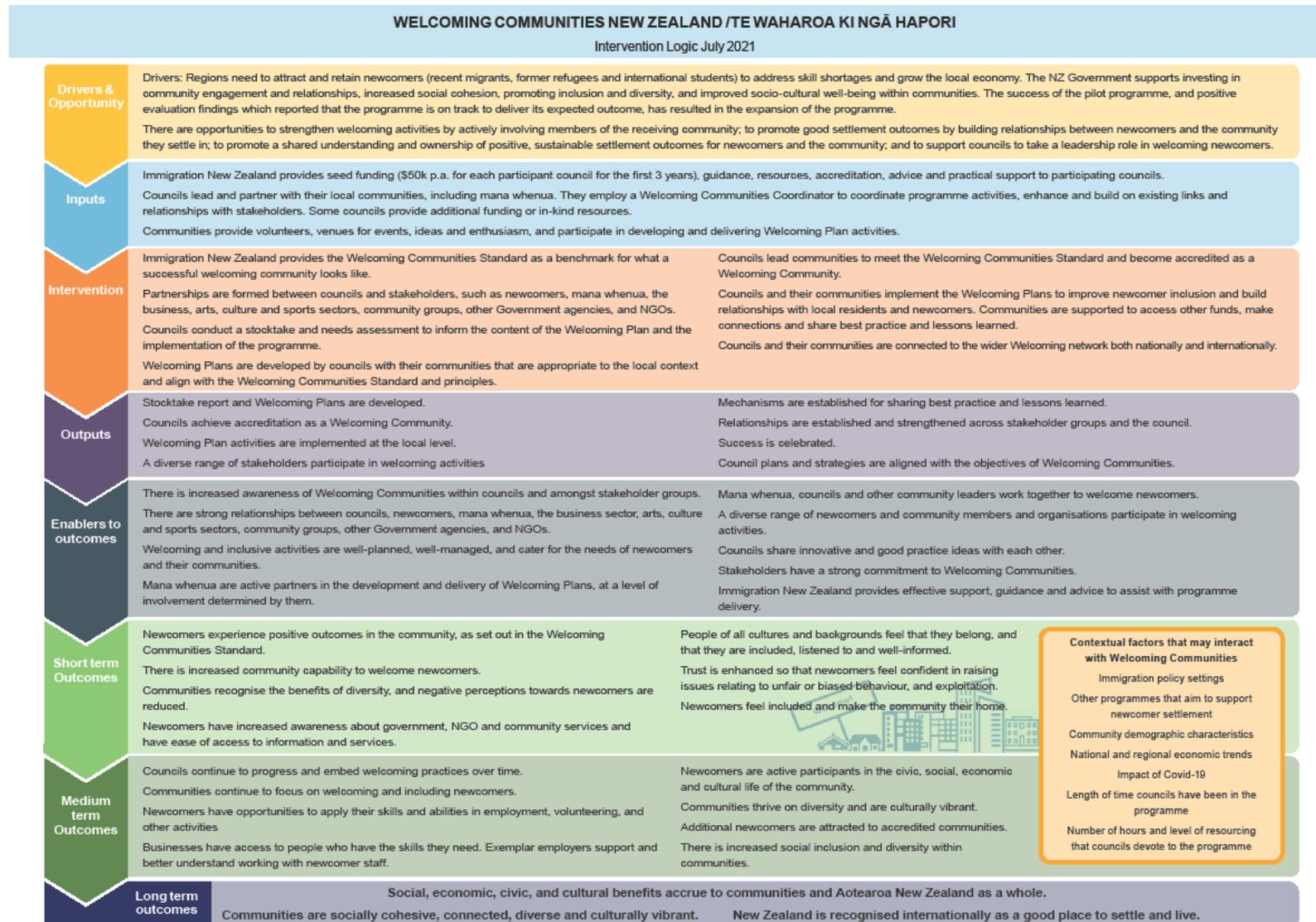
The survey instrument is embedded:



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Appendix C: Intervention Logic





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