



Cultural Well-Being and Local Government

Report 1: Definitions and contexts of cultural well-being

Under the Local Government Act 2002 (Section 10), one of the purposes of local government is to “... promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future”.

Cultural well-being, however, is not defined in the Act. This report therefore looks at a possible definition, reports on what cultural well-being means in theory and practice, and discusses how it interacts with other types of well-being. The final section focuses on the impact for local government.

Cultural well-being: a definition

The following definition is how the Ministry for Culture and Heritage has defined cultural well-being. This is just one attempt at a workable definition – each council is free to develop its own definition.

Cultural well-being is the vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through:

- **participation in recreation, creative and cultural activities; and**
- **the freedom to retain, interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions.**

For more on this definition, see <http://www.mch.govt.nz/cwb/index.html>

Cultural well-being: what is it?

When culture and well-being are brought together, the resulting concept is a dynamic one, influenced not only by arts and cultural activity, but also by such things as economic development, the maintenance of heritage, urban planning, provision and access to recreation and sports amenities, community health policy, community development strategies [etc]

(Vaneveld 2003)

At its core, cultural well-being is about activities and initiatives such as:

- support for arts and cultural expression;

- protecting cultural associations with our natural environment;
- the provision of library and archival services;
- celebrating the diversity within communities;
- the provision and maintenance of sports and recreational facilities and events; and
- conserving heritage buildings as much as urban space and rural landscapes.

It may also be considered to express:

- urban development, the creative industries, tourism and recreation;
- aspects of economic development and leisure activities (including sport);
- diversity, participation, partnership and innovation;
- impact on the individual, the neighbourhood and the community; and
- vitality, health and inclusion.

Cultural well-being can be seen as lying at the heart of a healthy society and community. And, for the individual, cultural activity can be seen as being at the heart of what it means to be a fully developed human being. A council's promotion of cultural well-being within the 'whole' of its region will be aiming to improve the cultural health of that community and focus on the necessary elements to bring about cultural growth.

Cultural well-being and identity

The well-being of people, individually and collectively, is closely linked to the values that arise from a strong sense of cultural and national identity. A multi-ethnic and democratic society will express a multitude of cultural identities (Statistics New Zealand 2005b). At a local level, these expressions of culture are important for:

- the intrinsic benefits and satisfactions to be gained from exposure to and involvement with culture;
- the potential for generating economic wealth; and
- the definition and assertion of New Zealand's national identity.

Culture is the foundation-stone of identity. Local and central government have important roles in ensuring that the fundamental freedom of New Zealand communities and individuals to retain, interpret and express their own cultures is at least retained – and at best guaranteed and enhanced.

Values, beliefs and identity provide the 'glue' for cultural well-being – they glue the 'cultural' and 'well-being' components together.

New Zealanders are engaging more and more with questions of what it means to be a 'New Zealander' and how we give expression to our identity and uniqueness. There are a similar set of questions to be addressed at the local and regional level: what makes Taranaki unique, what is Northland, what defines Canterbury – and, ultimately, how do you capture these values, beliefs and identities in action?

Culture

A discussion of what cultural well-being means will invariably bring in ideas of what 'culture' means. This is by no means an easy task. The *New Zealand Framework for Cultural Statistics* (1995) notes that there is no "universally accepted concept of culture".

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage takes a broad view of culture and cultural well-being. Culture includes heritage and the arts. And it can include a sense of

community, language, ethnicity, sport, recreation, and place and space (such as the built environment and landscapes). It encompasses all the multiple interactions of emotional, spiritual, historical, and physical aspects of human life within local contexts. So the ways that people recognise and respond to parts of their environment (such as the smell of pohutukawa blossom, or the sight of Rangitoto or Ruapehu, or the quality of the light in Central Otago) can be regarded as 'cultural' in this sense.

There are a number of key ideas in thinking about what 'culture' could mean. Generally, though, the concept is viewed in a broad sense to include elements of the way that people affirm their identity as individuals and in groups through the sharing of common objects, rituals, behaviours, and knowledge – as in this definition of culture from the UNESCO *Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001):

...the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society...it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, values systems, traditions and beliefs.

This broad approach has also been taken by others such as the Ministry of Social Development, which noted in *The Social Report 2003* that "Culture is much broader than artistic endeavours. However, the arts often explore cultural identity and can contribute to it. Many people define their culture at least partly by its music, art, literature and other artistic endeavours". Similarly, Penny Eames observes that "culture is broader and more than just artistic expression. It moves on from there to encompass growth essential to human existence – to cultivating, nurturing and caring"(Eames 2003, pp.4-16 and 2004, pp. 8-9).

Well-being

Most definitions of 'well-being' focus on quality of life and imply a healthy human condition as well as happiness and prosperity. Social science and health research suggests well-integrated individuals with shared community goals have better health and welfare outcomes (regardless of their socio-economic status).

References to social, economic and environmental dimensions of well-being (sometimes referred to as the 'triple bottom line') were commonplace in local-government planning documents of the mid to late 1990s. Many councils were also starting to mention cultural dimensions, usually in arts and heritage terms. Thus the inclusion of the reference to cultural well-being in the Local Government Act 2002 arose from a consideration of the particular context and historic roles of local government in New Zealand.

Like 'culture', 'well-being' is a term that is difficult to define – even though it has become widely used. Few councils have attempted to define what they mean by well-being, other than the 'de facto' definitions that can be inferred from the high-level community and council outcomes identified in the LTCCP processes.

Four types of well-being

Cultural well-being is just one of four types of well-being. The others are social, environmental and economic.

The Local Government Act 2002 emphasises the need for strategic planning, democratic decision-making, and a sustainable development approach that meets all

four types of well-being. Sustainable development will be achieved *only* if a council deals with all four types of well-being.

Interactions

Cultural, social, environmental, and economic well-being are interconnected. And cultural well-being interacts with each of the other types of well-being in particular ways:

- Social well-being overlaps with cultural well-being, especially in social connectedness.
- Economic well-being includes consideration of the impacts of arts, culture and heritage in stimulating economic growth.
- Environmental well-being, such as waterways enhancements, can also be a significant contributor to cultural well-being.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage has depicted the relationship between the four well-beings in diagrammatic form. The main points of this diagram are

- well-being is at the centre;
- well-being is enhanced when the four equidistant types of well-beings – social, cultural, economic, and environmental – move efficiently around the centre; and
- all of the four well-beings are interdependent and equal in 'weight'.



For more on this diagram, see <http://www.mch.govt.nz/cwb/index.html>

Councils are being challenged to integrate and balance the four types of well-being, in planning and practice. The most fruitful outcomes are likely to occur at the intersections, interactions and integration of well-beings.

Cultural + social

The Ministry of Social Development's *The Social Report 2003* (www.msdc.govt.nz) has identified ten components of social well-being. One of these is leisure and recreation, which overlaps into cultural well-being. The Ministry's identification of this overlap reflects the widely held view that social well-being has interactions with social connectedness, social inclusion, and social capital. The

'roulette wheels' indicators in *The Social Report* show how these indicators have been linked to particular social outcomes.

The Social Report defines social well-being as comprising "...those aspects of life that we care about as a society...[that] contribute to our individual happiness, quality of life, and welfare". This definition can be underpinned by the Report of the New Zealand Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988), which concluded that:

A good society is one which allows people to be heard, to have a say in their future, and choices in life...an atmosphere of community responsibility and an environment of security...social well-being includes that sense of belonging that affirms...dignity and identity and allows [people] to function in their everyday roles.

Certainly there is a widespread acceptance that culture can make an important contribution to a wider sense of social well-being and social cohesion. This is in the sense of encouraging self and collective expression, as well as access to new experiences that help socialisation, relaxation, enjoyment, and skill development.

Other 'social capital' literature is also related to cultural well-being. In practical terms, it may be about councils thinking about how the cultural facilities they have (such as halls and libraries) can be used to increase civic engagement and improve social connectedness.

Cultural + economic

Cultural activities support non-cultural objectives in areas such as tourism and creative industries, through employment and foreign exchange earnings.

There has been recent New Zealand debate about how best to foster innovation and economic growth. For example, the Growth and Innovation Advisory Board (2004) has asserted that "culture is a vital ingredient for growth and innovation...our 'New Zealandness' is now our greatest competitive advantage".

Similarly, the *Tourism Research and Development Strategy* (2002) has identified that defining national, regional and local identity is crucial for cultural-tourism purposes. While there is distinct potential for added value from "regional differentiation based on cultural elements and resources", these regional variations sit within and (crucially) depend upon national expressions of "defining New Zealand's culture".

The Christchurch City Council *Survey of Arts Participation* (2003) found 77% of its survey respondents agreed that participation in arts and cultural activities define who we are as New Zealanders. Defining who we are can thus impact upon what we earn as well as what we feel and can express.

Some key activities such as the arts have a strong and obvious cultural well-being component. But a bigger challenge for councils is to understand how they can integrate cultural well-being into many of the other activities that they undertake.

For example: the design, location and building of roads or major infrastructure projects (often seen as economic in focus) can also reflect and integrate concerns for cultural well-being through the design of urban parks, the diversion of streams and rivers, building of breakwaters, etc.

Although cultural well-being now forms part of the mandate under which councils must operate, neither the nature nor the extent of this is determined – and this gives both freedom and uncertainty. So a broader conceptual approach to cultural well-being might recognise that local government support already exists for the ‘cultural well-being’ aspects of arts festivals, fairs, gala days, regular fairs and markets such as the Saturday Otara and Porirua markets, weekly Orewa farmers market, and twice-yearly Martinborough fair. And it might also recognise that ‘cultural well-being’ is supported through the assistance given to the clusters of small creative businesses which establish a reputation for a district or region.

David Bergman (2004) has argued for the use of the term ‘creative tourism’ to further emphasise how the terms ‘creative industries’ and ‘cultural tourism’ are interlinked. Creative industries now comprise 27.1% of the New Zealand workforce (Florida 2004). Although the economic potential of creative industries is difficult to measure (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 1998, 2001), the idea of harnessing this potential appeals to many central and local government agencies and authorities. Examples of significant creative industries which have become prominent in New Zealand in recent decades include music, digital media, screen production, publishing, fashion design, and tourism.

In the New Zealand context, research reports and planning around ‘cultural tourism’ have been a focus for local and regional government economic-development activity. The New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010 (2001) further emphasised the importance of ensuring that:

New Zealanders’ environment and culture is conserved and sustained in the spirit of kaitiakitanga (guardianship)...[and that there is]... recognition, understanding and appreciation of New Zealand’s built, historical, cultural and Māori heritage.

Cultural tourism has been a feature of regional precincts and promotions – such as the Oamaru heritage district and Art Deco Napier (both now under review for World Heritage Site recognition: see Department of Conservation 2004), the Nelson Bays Arts Advocacy and Marketing Network, and the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trail.

Cultural + environmental

The Resource Management Act 1991 dominates environmental issues in local government. The Ministry for the Environment (<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/envwellbeing/>) usefully summarises some approaches for reconciling the Local Government Act processes with those of the Resource Management Act 1991.

But, if this Act is put to one side, the main areas of environmental interest are urban affairs and sustainable cities. The key issues here include:

- urban infrastructure and design (related to the *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* – see <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/urban/design-protocol-mar05/>;
- the quality of the built environment;
- transport (such as in Auckland’s sustainable cities initiative); and
- urban research and its information base.

While cultural well-being tends to be submerged into social well-being, its links to both economic and environmental well-being are often clearer. For instance, the cultural importance of even minor enhancements to waterways – by regional councils

in particular – can be significant. They can also contribute to sustainable development at a local, regional and national level (Hills 2002).

The report *New Zealand Water Bodies* (2004), which builds on earlier work such as Tipa and Teimey (2003), includes criteria and methodologies for assessing the heritage and/or environmental importance of rivers, lakes and other waterways: “water bodies may have cultural heritage value because of intangible associations”. Elements of physical heritage such as geographical features, and archaeological remains of settlements or vessels, may have similar cultural value.

Māori concepts of well-being

Māori conceptualisations of well-being do not split well-being into types. Instead, they stress the holistic nature of well-being and bring into sharper relief spiritual and familial components: “Māori well-being is critically bound up with the question of the control of one’s destiny, as an individual and as a member of a collectivity” (Benton et al 2002 Vol 1, p.51). Health and well-being in Māori tradition also tend to include observance of Mātauranga Māori (traditions and knowledge) which includes conservancy and stewardship of the natural estate.

Mason Durie, reflecting his background in health policy and research, has developed a widely well-regarded model of ‘Well-Being/Hauora’. This encompasses the physical, mental and emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of health. And his Whare Tapawha model compares hauora to the four walls of a whare, each wall representing a different dimension; all four necessary for strength and symmetry.

Another influential model is the octopus model, Te Wheke, developed by Rose Pere.

For diagrams and descriptions of both of these models, see Love 2004 and <http://www.maorihealth.govt.nz/2004/0,204,1767c60,4001.php#>).

Harré-Hindmarsh (2003) refers to cultural heritage as being synonymous with cultural well-being and a core component of waiora – and therefore closely aligned with other key tangible and intangible Māori concepts such as:

- *mana ake* – uniqueness, positive identity, pride, self esteem
- *mauri* – life-sustaining principle in people and objects, vitality
- *whatumanawa* – expression of emotions, ‘heart’
- *whanaungatanga* – family, sense of belonging
- *wairuatanga* – spirit, essence
- *hinengaroa* – the mind, intellect
- *tinana* – the physical
- *turangawaewae* – place, birthplace, land base
- *papatuanuku* – heritage landscape, natural heritage
- *whakapapa* – genealogy
- *korero* - stories, narratives, mythologies, tales
- *ha, taonga tuku iho, taonga* – breath, treasures from our ancestors, the past, and today
- *tikanga* – customs
- *te reo* – language.

Cultural well-being interacts with 'heritage' and 'sport and recreation'

Heritage

Local government addresses heritage values through the Resource Management Act 1991. Section 7(e) requires councils to give particular regard to “recognition and protection of heritage values of sites, buildings, places or areas”. An authoritative and useful resource here is the *Heritage Management Guidelines for Resource Management Practitioners* (Historic Places Trust/Ministry for the Environment 2004).

A number of councils, notably Manukau City Council and Auckland Regional Council, have developed a concept of ‘cultural heritage’ (ARC 2005a-c and Coffin 2005). This incorporates aspects of what might elsewhere be referred to in this discussion paper as ‘cultural well-being’.

‘Cultural heritage’ recognises the metaphysical or spiritual qualities of locations – and so it includes oral histories, churches, markets, and particular vistas. It also “represents those attributes, tangible and intangible, from the distant and more recent past, that establish a connection to former times and are intrinsically lined to community identity, sense of place and spirituality”.

Also of interest is *People and Places: Social Inclusion Policy for the Built and Historic Environment*,

(www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2002/people_places.html). This 2002 report from the UK’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport uses case studies and examples of good practice to highlight how ‘social inclusion’ can become a priority for all organisations engaged in planning, producing, and promoting contemporary and historic built environments.

Sport and recreation

Sport and recreation are fundamental to the well-being of all New Zealanders, providing positive health, economic, social, and cultural outcomes.

Sport and Physical Activity in 2nd Generation Local Public Service Agreements. Guidance Notes. Sport England (2004) emphasises how sport can improve quality of life and deliver effective and sustainable solutions that tackle health, community safety, raising attainment, social inclusion, and economic prosperity. It also contains a useful section on the development of outcome indicators (www.sportengland.org.psa).

The concept of ‘community development and health’ is often linked with discussions of sport and recreation in terms of enhancing well-being (Mills and Brown 2004).

A key resource for cultural well-being practitioners in New Zealand local government is the research compiled by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). Of particular relevance is the regional presentation of their sport, physical activity and recreation survey-research. These and related research reports are available at <http://www.sparc.org.nz/research/>

SPARC has collected regional/provincial data on sport, recreational and sporting activity in SPARC Facts RST Profiles (available at <http://www.sparc.org.nz/research/>). This data may be of use to councils, especially for sport and recreation planning and indicator development.

SPARC also invests in an 'Active Communities' scheme which includes local government partners and programmes such as Rotorua District Council (Get Active Stay Active), North Shore City Council (Active Friendly Environments), and Taupo District Council (Exercise on Prescription).

SPARC's commitment to cultural well-being is the focus of a document on the Ministry for Culture and Heritage's webpage (<http://www.mch.govt.nz/cwb/index.html>).

What does this mean for local government?

A society's values are the basis upon which all else is built. These values and the way they are expressed are a society's culture. The way a society governs itself cannot be fully democratic without there being clear avenues for the expression of community values, and unless these expressions directly affect the directions society takes. These processes are culture at work.

(Hawkes 2001, p.vii)

Cultural well-being should ultimately be predicated on an active recognition that cultural participation is central to realising the potential for New Zealanders to lead fully rewarding, expressive and creative lives.

Many writers see cultural well-being as being linked to the engagement and development of citizenship, especially at a local level – although the extent of this linkage will vary widely (Mills 2003, Mercer 2004, Hawkes 2001 and 2004).

Councils have always been key providers and supporters of cultural activities such as libraries, multi-cultural festivals, environmental enhancements to waterways and mainstreets (paving, lighting and street furniture), and the underwriting of local and regional arts organisations. But the promotion of culture or cultural well-being is not simply a continuation of the provision of libraries, sports fields, museums or galleries, although these will still matter.

The difference between what councils have done in the past and what they will do in the future under the Local Government Act 2002 may be as much about changing their 'standpoint' and orientation as about undertaking new activities.

The Local Government Act 2002 may create high expectations for the delivery of cultural outcomes at local levels. The capacity to deliver new or enhanced cultural outcomes will vary according to council size, economic (ratings) base, and appreciation of cultural well-being.

Promoting cultural well-being will not always simply be about reflecting what the community wants. In most cases, councils will have weighty decisions to make on emphasis, priorities, and funding – and in some cases there will be competing demands on resources. Sometimes councils will need to map a new course for the communities they serve, and will need to make it clear that there has to be a tradeoff between the different types of well-being.

It should also be noted that some aspects of cultural well-being may not require any direct local government involvement – there may be central-government or

community initiatives already underway. Nevertheless, local-government planning and priority setting will need to be mindful of these initiatives.

Developing community outcomes

The Local Government Act 2002 is empowering rather than prescriptive. It allows councils to develop and define ways in which they will meet outcomes related to cultural well-being, according to their purposes and particular identity. Under the terms of the Act, councils are preparing to deliver their first fully compliant LTCCPs in 2006.

This means that the next fifteen to eighteen months – while the first set of LTCCPs is being prepared and implemented – is a critical period for engagement by central government in this process. Partnership is especially important, as is listening to the experiences of councils who have been attempting to integrate cultural well-being into the myriad of functions they already undertake.

The Local Government Act 2002 (Section 91) refers to the consultative processes expected of local government, which are intended to “provide opportunities for communities to discuss their desired outcomes in terms of ... social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being ... to discuss the relative importance and priorities of identified outcomes [and] ... to inform and guide the setting of priorities in relation to the activities of the local authority and other organisations”. These processes will include documenting and understanding the demographic, cultural and ethnic mix of local and regional populations.

Councils have or are identifying potential activities under the community-outcomes process. These will have funding and policy implications, with consequent effects on all types of well-being (Local Government New Zealand 2003a, pp. 42-43).

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2005) has undertaken a ‘scan’ of current and transitional LTCCPs, noting especially the references to cultural well-being.¹ The key findings were:

- There are differences between community outcomes and council goals and outputs (and not all councils have been explicit about this).
- Some councils have mixed their discussions of social and cultural well-being (rather than seeing them as different).
- There seem to have been some difficulties for councils in capturing cultural well-being objectives and outcomes.
- There are distinctions between how councils describe their regions and the types of outcomes/visions they have for the future – some councils are far more aspirational than others which have more specific objectives.
- Regional councils have the widest variance in their engagement with cultural well-being.
- There are an often confusing variety of terms being used by councils to describe their roles in their LTCCPs.

¹ This scan was developed for Ministry use, and does not necessarily represent the views of the Ministry on local government processes. All data was compiled from electronic records of LTCCPs (including transitional LTCCPs) accessed via the www.localgovt.co.nz website. The summary does not attempt to comprehensively analyse or assess council approaches to community well-being, nor purport to present a definitive understanding of each council’s approach to cultural well-being.

In their current and transitional LTCCPs, a number of councils have listed the roles that they will be undertaking alongside specific community outcomes and outputs. These roles include "Facilitator", "Funder", "Co-Funder", "Advocate", "Promoter", "Implementer", "Capacity Builder", "Supporter of the Arts", "Regulator", "Planner", and "Provider". In many of these roles a partnering arrangement will be necessary, in order for the council to achieve its desired outcomes (or to see it achieved by others).

The importance of partnerships

It is true that "... solutions that make sense locally have to emerge from local thinking and action" (Goss 2001, p.110). But there is scope in the 'well-being' provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 for council partnerships with local agencies and organisations (both in the private sector and in central government). One example of a partnership that already exists is the Regional Strengths and Creative Places schemes run by Creative New Zealand (Creative New Zealand 2005).

Central government policies also support 'cultural development' at local and regional levels through:

- the active recognition of New Zealand's diverse heritage values;
- commitment to partnerships (to achieve mutual outcomes) with communities, diverse cultures, charitable sponsors, artistic and community groups, and young people;
- enhanced access to and participation in cultural opportunities; and
- recognition of the wider benefits of cultural investments – urban development and revitalisation, economic development through creative industries and cultural innovation, and increased tourism.

Cultural well-being also connects with broader government policies and programmes such as:

- the government's [Sustainable Development Programme of Action](#), which includes cultural values that are consistent with the focus of the Local Government Act 2002;
- the work around 'Sustainable Cities', which recognises that committed support for cultural identities and activities ensures that social well-being can be achieved in New Zealand cities;
- [regional development](#);
- [Growth and Innovation Framework](#);
- 'Opportunity for All New Zealanders' (<http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/cross-sectoral-work/opportunity-for-all.html>);
- recent amendments to the Resource Management Amendment Act 1991, which have elevated 'historic heritage' to a matter of national importance (Section 6) and which will require councils to provide for the protection of historic heritage against inappropriate subdivision, use and development (Section ??).
- the investment in child and youth development, where 'cultural diversity' and 'cultural strength' are fundamental elements.

Local government does not have to shoulder all the burden of promoting well-being – whether cultural, social, environmental, or economic. Some of it can be shared through strategic alliances with business, community and government partners. There are clear benefits from partnership (Geddes 2005). Central and local government, and also the private sector, are increasingly recognising this (McKinlay Douglas 2004).