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Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee  
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## Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index 2014

### 1. Purpose

To present early results of the 2014 Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (WR-GPI) and outline the proposed steps to promote and use the set of wellbeing indicators once the report is complete.

### 2. Background

The WR-GPI was initially developed in 2009/10 and first published in 2011. The 2011 publication received significant media attention and was widely recognised as a progressive and collaborative initiative, winning the 2011 GHD Supreme Award and the Joined Up Local Government Category at the 2011 SOLGM Local Government Excellence Awards.

Genuine Progress Indexes have been developed by governments around the world, and are acknowledged as a useful method for assessing the inter-relationships between economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes. The GPI system counts beneficial activities (e.g. school leavers with NCEA) as positive and detrimental indicators (e.g. the unemployment rate) as negative, producing a composite index that reflects a balanced picture of progress.

The WR-GPI provides an alternative method for measuring progress. It is not designed to replace or to challenge GDP. It simply provides another system for examining the effects of policies, behaviours and activities occurring in or affecting well-being in the region.

The advantage of having this alternate lens is that it enables the community to demand less answers from GDP. Because GDP has dominated regional, national and international conversations about wellbeing for decades, it is expected to provide a useful interpretation of what is currently happening across multiple aspects of our society. But GDP was never designed to achieve that end. GDP was created as a method for answering questions such as “how fast is the economy growing,” “what is the pattern of spending on goods and

services,” and “what percent of the increase in production is due to inflation,”<sup>1</sup> It is purely an economic metric.

### **3. WR-GPI 2001 - 2013**

#### **3.1 Key Findings**

**Attachment 1** reports the draft high level results, including graphs for the overall WR-GPI, each wellbeing aspect and community outcome area. Dashboards, which provide information on the wellbeing trend for each individual indicator, are also included.

The results show that there are positive and negative trends across the indicators but overall, the general movement across the whole of the indicators is positive, with the WR-GPI increasing 3.26% between 2001 and 2013. The increase can be attributed to improvement in the economic and environmental wellbeing areas. However, progress appears to have been constrained by declines amongst many social and most cultural indicators.

#### **3.2 Economic Well-being**

Economic well-being is made up of indicators from two community outcome areas – prosperous community and entrepreneurial and innovative community. Overall, the trend for the economic well-being GPI is positive, as it has increased between 2001 and 2010. The trend shows that the GPI gradually increased between 2002 and 2008, and then decreased from 2008 to 2010 before increasing again.

#### **3.3 Environmental Well-being**

The environmental well-being GPI is represented by one community outcome called healthy environment. This outcome connects to the principles of environmental wellbeing through its focus on high quality water, air and soils, well-functioning ecosystems and sustainable resource use. The trend for the environment well-being GPI between 2001 and 2010 has gradually increased, followed by a decrease in 2010, before increasing again in 2011.

#### **3.4 Cultural Well-being**

The cultural well-being GPI is made up of indicators from one community outcome – Strong and Tolerant Community. Overall, the cultural well-being GPI has declined over the 2001 to 2013 period. There is no significant change in the cultural wellbeing GPI between 2001 and 2009, followed by a two year decline, which is then reversed.

#### **3.5 Social Well-being**

The social well-being GPI is made up of indicators from five community outcome areas – healthy community, connected community, sense of place, quality lifestyle and regional foundations. Overall, the social well-being GPI indicates no significant change over the 2001 to 2013 period. However, there

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<sup>1</sup> McCulla and Smith 2007 in Costanza, 2009, p.4

are signs of improvement with a slight increase observed over the last three years.

## **4. Next Steps**

### **4.2 Proposed process for application of the WR-GPI**

Now that data for all the indicators has been compiled, the results will be discussed with the WR-GPI Working Group, which is made up of officers from each council in the region, the District Health Boards and other community stakeholders, and the final report will be completed.

The WR-GPI report is expected to be published in late September 2014, and the WR-GPI website updated accordingly.

A series of workshops will be held to determine how the results can inform initiatives being delivered or planned by the organisations represented on the Working Group. A key learning from the 2011 WR-GPI was that the WR-GPI has the capacity to inform policy and program development, however the interpretation of the results, and the communications relating to the WR-GPI could be better coordinated across the respective organisations in order to ensure practical application of the WR-GPI is comprehensive and enduring.

### **3.2 Proposed review of the WR-GPI**

The workshop series will also provide an opportunity for the WR-GPI framework to be reviewed. As was anticipated when the WR-GPI was first published, the Working Group has recognised that the current set of indicators could be optimised as some indicators are no longer as relevant as they were in 2011. This is typically because either the data source has weakened in some way (e.g. the sample size has diminished), a better indicator has evolved (e.g. a more comprehensive survey with more relevant questions has started) or the indicators relevance in relation to other indicators or a community outcome requires review.

## **5. Communication**

Once published, the WR-GPI report will be printed in hard copy and made available to interested organisations and individuals. The website will also be updated.

The WR-GPI Working Group will develop a communications plan for when the WR-GPI is released.

The Wellington Regional Strategy Office is happy to talk to any council about the WR-GPI. Alternatively, when completed, the council representatives on the GPI Working Group will also be able to discuss the results with their respective councils.

## **6. The decision-making process and significance**

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matters requiring decision in this report have been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

### **6.1 Significance of the decision**

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council to consider the significance of the decision. The term ‘significance’ has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

## **7. Recommendations**

*That the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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**Attachment 1:** 2014 WR-GPI: Initial results (draft)