

# Annual Report

## 2021-2022

Wellington  
Regional Leadership Committee

## Foreword from the Chair

**Hon. Tracey Martin, Independent Chair of the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee**



Hon. Tracey Martin, Independent Chair, WRLC

**It is a pleasure to present the first Annual Report for the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee (WRLC).**

The WRLC is a joining of local government, iwi and central government in the Wellington-Wairarapa-Horowhenua region, formed to activate better cross-agency collaboration to work together to positively shape the future of the region. The WRLC members are identified in Section 2.2 of this report.

The WRLC is tasked with driving the implementation of the Wellington Regional Growth Framework and to oversee Regional Economic Development and Regional Economic Recovery in the region.

### **Highlights of year one of the WRLC include:**

- Establishing the largest joint committee in NZ, a significant milestone in the history of our region. A new platform and way of working, connecting diverse partners to break down silos and support greater alignment and efficiency. We have drawn in stakeholders to consider issues from a collective-responsibility lens, to seek consensus through honest conversations, and enable thought-leadership.
- Implementing a comprehensive work programme across key issues of housing, iwi capacity, climate change, transport and economic development.

- Completing and getting signoff by the Committee for a Regional Housing Action Plan, an iwi capacity and capability scoping report and a Regional Economic Development Plan.
- Holding an Inaugural Annual Partners Forum – we brought together governance members of all partners to the WRLC, to socialise our work programme, enable networking, and workshop questions relating to the future development strategy. The 85 attendees included councillors, iwi board members and central government agency officials, along with WRLC project teams.

Key central government agencies actively involved in our work programme include the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD), Kāinga Ora and Waka Kotahi. Throughout the year we have also been working with Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

I look forward to seeing the work that is currently underway being completed and new projects commencing in the 2022-2023 year. You can read about these projects in Section 1.1 of this report.



# Section 1: The Wellington Regional Leadership Committee Story

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Since it was established in July 2021 under the Government's Urban Growth Agenda, the WRLC has progressed the agenda's purpose to improve alignment and coordination between central and local government and mana whenua in high growth urban areas.

Although daunting, a growth scenario of 200,000 more people in our region in the next 30 years, has catalysed a positive shift from a region where previously local government, central and iwi worked less together, with much duplicated effort, towards a more cohesive region with agreement on the importance of collective responsibility in order to unlock greater opportunities for our shared future.

**In the first half of year one**, the WRLC agreed its objectives, including to embed collective responsibility for growth-related issues, to look for opportunities for alignment and efficiency to maximise resources and impact, and shifted to a collective decision-making approach.

**Partners** have successfully established good working relationships and a culture of trust and cooperation, which has enabled the successful establishment and activation of 12 projects, three of which are now complete. These 12 projects each fall into one or more of the five key priority areas of transport, housing, iwi capacity, regional climate and emissions, and economic development.

Significant **year one project milestones** include completion of a Regional Housing Action Plan, Regional Economic Development Plan and an Iwi Capacity and Capability scoping report – to identify tangible action we can collectively take to empower iwi participation and partnership in future-shaping roles.

Activity is now occurring at a faster pace and in a more joined up local government, central government and mana whenua way than ever before in this region.

We are excited for **year two and beyond**, as the new platform of the WRLC works to make our growth story a positive one: continuing to unite as one voice for the region, enhancing opportunities for central government funding, more collaborations and alignment, and an increased focus on project implementation and increasing housing in the region through the focus on Complex Development Opportunities (CDOs) as outlined in the project section below.

We will continue to keep a line of sight with our objectives and desired outcomes: the **wellbeing of all our region** and its people. We will emphasise partnership values with iwi and aim to ensure that voice helps to shape our growth story.

1.1 WRLC Work Programme 2021/22

The WRLC work programme covers three spheres of responsibility across the region. Our projects all fall into one or more of the five key areas, shown below.

DIAGRAM 1: WRLC PROJECTS BY KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

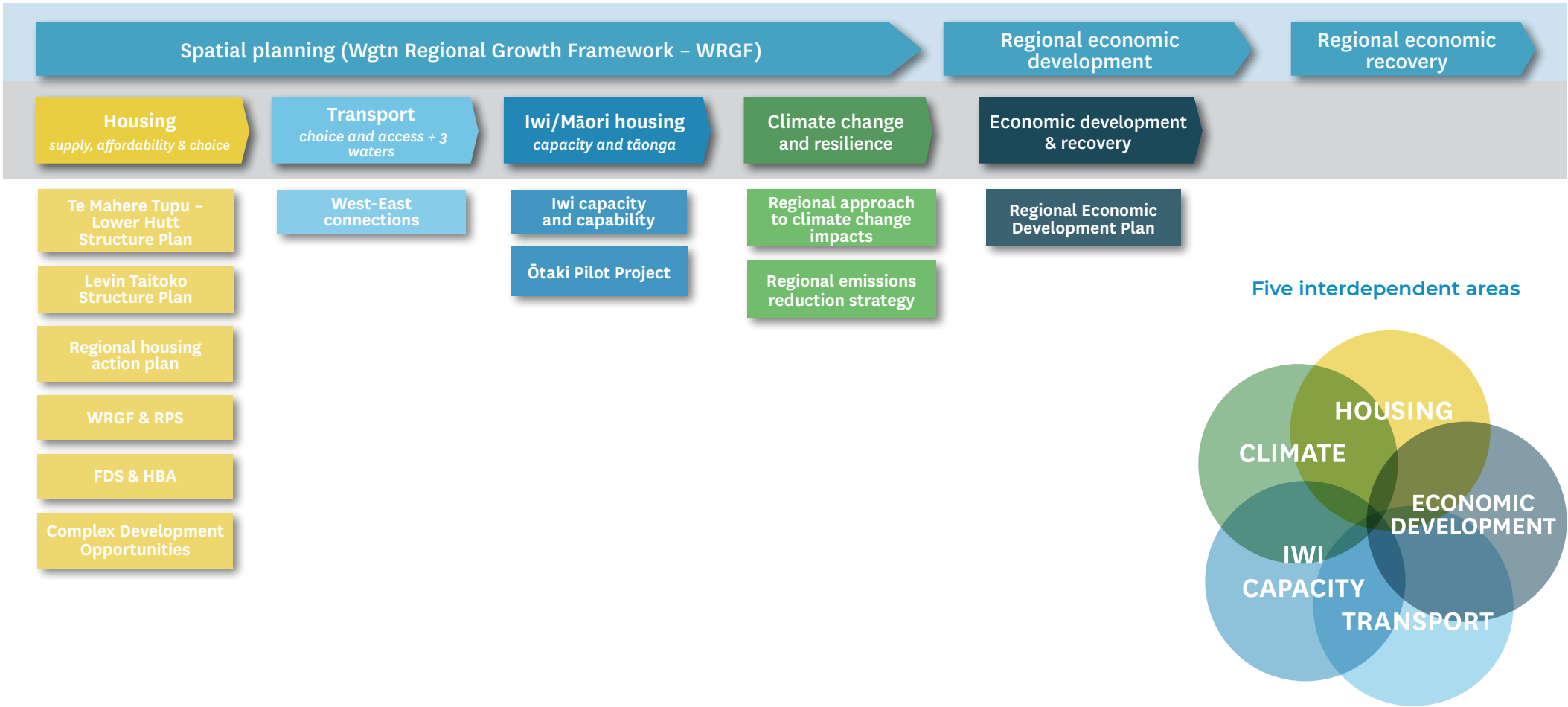


DIAGRAM 2: WRLC PROJECTS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

WRLC YEAR ONE PROJECT MAP

REGION-WIDE PROJECTS

Iwi Capacity & Capability

Future Development Strategy & Housing & Business Capacity Assessment

Regional Approach to Climate Change Impacts

Regional Emissions Reduction Strategy

Regional Economic Development Plan

WRGF & RPS

Regional Housing Action Plan

Complex Development Opportunities (CDOs)

1 Featherston Masterplan Development

2 LGWM - Courtenay Place to Newtown

3 Ōtaki

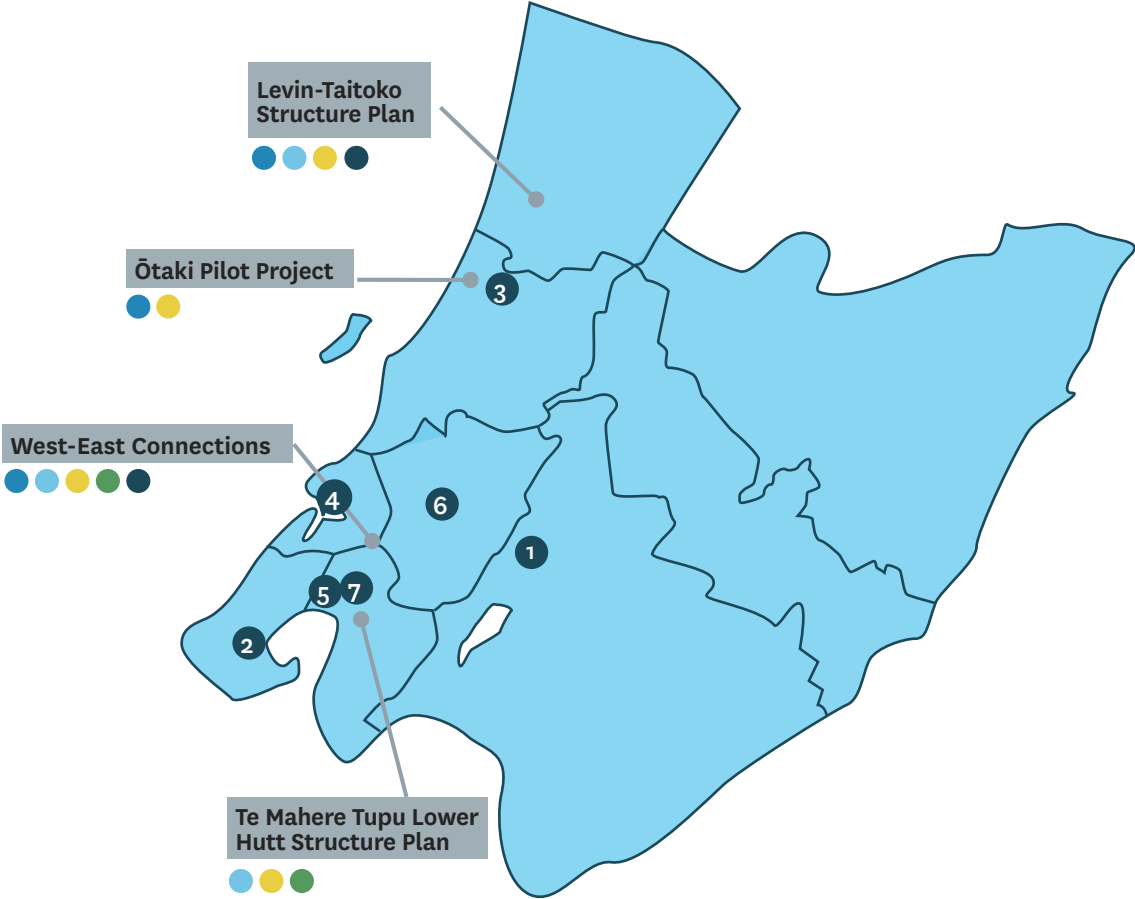
4 Porirua Northern Growth Area

5 Riverlink

6 Trentham

7 Waterloo Station Transport Oriented Development

LOCATION-SPECIFIC PROJECTS



KEY - FOCUS AREAS

TRANSPORT

CLIMATE

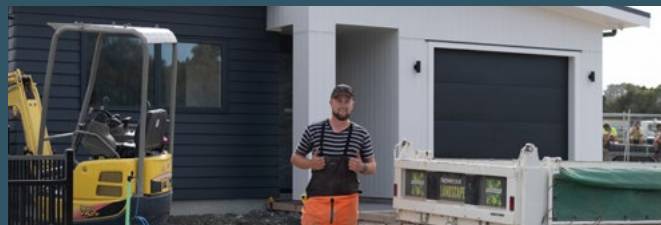
HOUSING

IWI CAPACITY

ECONOMIC DEV

## 1.2 WRLC Projects

An overview of our 2021–2022-year projects both active and complete is below. It should be noted that projects commenced at different times throughout the year. For further information on each project, please click on the ‘More info’ link in each box.



### IWI CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Understand issues in iwi involvement in WRLC projects and identify preferred options to overcome capacity and capability challenges.

#### What happened this year?

Workshops and one on one discussions with many stakeholders, to discuss options and help to inform a scoping paper.

#### Status: Complete

The Iwi Capacity and Capability scoping paper was approved by the Committee in May 2022.

[More info: Iwi capacity and capability - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

The project will move into the implementation phase of the agreed opportunities in 2022–2023.

The target is to establish active secondments, work placements or governance opportunities for each iwi partner to the WRLC.

### REGIONAL HOUSING ACTION PLAN

Develop a five-year plan that focuses on housing related interventions to 2027. It has been developed in the context of regional growth and significant reforms the government is proposing.

#### What happened this year?

This project was commissioned and developed using a Steering Group of central and local government, mana whenua and the private housing sector

#### Status: Complete

The Regional Housing Action Plan was approved by the Committee in March 2022.

[More info: Regional housing action plan - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

The project will move into the implementation phase to deliver quick wins and short-term success, achieving the Regional Housing Action Plan objectives.

A joint implementation group will be responsible for delivery.

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Develop a Regional Economic Development Plan to identify priority sectors and initiatives for the next 10 years.

#### What happened this year?

The key components for the Regional Economic Development Plan were agreed by the Committee in May 2022.

#### Status: Complete

The final Regional Economic Development Plan was approved by the Committee in July 2022.

[More info: Regional economic development plan - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

The project will move into implementation phase and building the pipeline of initiatives from the plan.

A joint implementation group will be responsible for delivery.



### REGIONAL APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

Develop a regional understanding of the expected climate change impacts in the region over the next 100+ years and an approach that enables climate change adaptation

#### What happened this year?

**Underway:** Work with a Beca-NIWA-GNS consortium has commenced to design the delivery of one of NZ's most complex climate change risk assessments.

We have developed a bespoke methodology for the assessment and the consolidation of 200+ existing data sources already available into a centralised location.

[More info: Regional approach to climate change impacts assessment - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

The next phase of the project will focus on the delivery of the assessment, design of an accessible GIS mapping tool that supports decision-makers across the region to incorporate climate risks



### REGIONAL EMISSIONS REDUCTION STRATEGY

Develop a collectively owned regional emissions reduction strategy which directs the transition to a no carbon region.

#### What happened this year?

**Underway:** Work is underway to take stock of existing emission reduction plans in the region, identify gaps in emissions reduction action and analyse what issues that a regional emissions reduction strategy will need to address.

[More info: Regional emissions reduction strategy - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

The project will move into the next phase which is to develop a collectively owned Regional Emissions Reduction Strategy which directs the transition to a no carbon region.



### WELLINGTON REGIONAL GROWTH FRAMEWORK AND REGIONAL POLICY

Develop the GWRC Regional Policy Statement (RPS) to provide the regulatory framework for the implementation of the Wellington Regional Growth Framework and give effect to national policy direction.

#### What happened this year?

**Underway:** Development of Regional Policy Statement (RPS) Change 1 is underway and consultation is expected to commence in line with statutory requirements.

[More info: Wellington regional growth framework and regional policy statement - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

In August 2022, proposed RPS Change 1 is expected to be approved for public submissions. Later in the process, hearings will be undertaken, under the formal plan-making process in Schedule 1 of the RMA, will follow.





### LEVIN TAITOKO STRUCTURE PLAN

Jointly develop a plan to transform community and housing development and maximise the benefits from changes occurring in road and rail services.

#### What happened this year?

**Underway:** In first stage of this project, three scenarios for the future have been developed that present a range of exciting urban futures and clear spatial vision for the Levin/Taitoko region.

[More info: Levin structure plan - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

The year ahead will see the testing of these scenarios and the deliverability of the ambition to ensure we have a credible and realisable plan with agreed responsibilities for delivery from the region's stakeholders.



### TE MAHERE TUPU – LOWER HUTT STRUCTURE PLAN

Jointly create a plan guiding development of the valley floor that creates great places to live and work, improves health and wellbeing outcomes, providing a sense of community.

#### What happened this year?

**Underway:** The project is in the initial phase. It has started with community engagements and hosted exhibitions in partnership with Victoria University where students explored different hypothetical design briefs to stimulate further thinking about how Te Awa Kairangi might evolve into the future.

[More info: Lower Hutt structure plan - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

Next year the project team will undertake engagement with kahui/external stakeholder groups on current housing density implications and undertake a review of green spaces and transport.

The spatial and structural plan for the City Centre will be finalised.



### ŌTAKI PILOT PROJECT

Facilitate housing development opportunities in Ōtaki, informing approaches to future housing provision (particularly papakāinga), and the development of supporting wider social and transport infrastructure, enabling people to live well, thrive and enabling the successful Māori-led housing responses.

#### What happened this year?

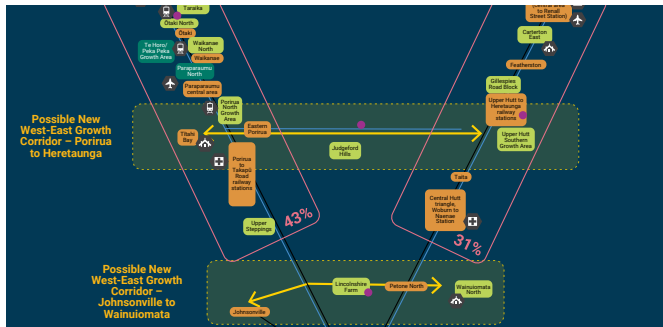
**Underway:** This project is in its set up stage.

[More info: Ōtaki pilot project - WRLC](#)

#### Plan for next year

Te Puni Kokiri have agreed to lead this project as part of a broader initiative to support hapu and whanau in their papakāinga initiatives.

The project is due to kick off in early 2022-2023 with a series of hui.



## WEST-EAST CONNECTIONS

Explore opportunities for a new connection between the west and east of the region, providing transport, resilience, , housing and neighbourhoods, business and employment opportunities.

### What happened this year?

**Underway:** This project is in its set up stage.

Waka Kotahi are working aligning the timing and resourcing of the Programme Business Case for this project with their Emission Reduction Plan.

More info: [West-east access, housing and resilience investigation - WRLC](#)

### Plan for next year

The Programme Business Case for the West-East Connections will commence.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND HOUSING AND BUSINESS CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Complete the Future Development Strategy by June 2023 to inform the 2024 Long Term Plans of councils, in a collaborative manner to reflect the WRLC partnership approach.

### What happened this year?

**Underway:** This project is in the setup phase. It has received Committee endorsement to proceed in 2022-23.

More info: [Regional Housing & Business Development Capacity Assessment 2022 - WRLC](#)

### Plan for next year

Work will commence on the Housing and Business Capacity Assessment and Future Development Strategy with the aim of completing the Future Development Strategy in time to inform the Long-Term Plan process of councils in the region.

## COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Create a partnership approach between local and central government and lwi to deliver projects that are complex and significantly beneficial to the region

### What happened this year?

**Underway:** The following Complex Development Opportunity projects were selected by a task group, and approved by the WRLC:

- Featherston Masterplan Development
- LGWM - Courtenay Place to Newtown
- Ōtaki
- Porirua Northern Growth Area
- Riverlink
- Trentham
- Waterloo Station Transport Oriented Development

### Plan for next year

In the next year, the project groups will be formalised and the Complex Development Opportunity processes will be designed with the full participation of the project managers, project partners and the WRLC.

We expect to see some accelerated housing development due to this work.

### 1.3 Our communication and engagement

Our first year focused on establishing our communications and engagement systems and processes, including writing our communications and stakeholder engagement strategy, building a website, developing a LinkedIn presence, and a monthly eNewsletter, which now goes to 515 subscribers. In year two as more projects move from planning to delivery, our communications will focus on building awareness of our work and why it matters for communities. Distribution of information will increasingly use our partners channels, and more news media.

We have had several thought-leadership pieces from those involved in the housing and urban development sector in our eNews – bringing innovative cross-sector thinking to our audience. Our contributors are briefed to craft a future-focused, vision-creating, relatable narrative. This will continue in year two, helping to bring partners and the community with us on this journey.

Each WRLC project has a project lead, who manages the project team. Teams are generally comprised of local government, central government, iwi and private sector people. With our projects having many interdependencies, our communication across projects is vital. In year one we have held regular project lead meetings and several targeted project workshops such as iwi engagement. COVID has shifted many meetings to online, but we hope to have more in person meetings going forward.

In our first year we delivered two successful events, designed to increase awareness and support for our work. In June 2022 we held a breakfast meeting with Members of Parliament (MPs), presenting our work programme to the region's MPs. We shared our purpose, objectives, achievements so far, and our vision. We discussed how and why to support our work, and how we could help with their work. MPs were engaged and supportive.

Also in June 2022 we held our inaugural Annual Partners Forum, bringing together 85 attendees including elected officials from across the region, iwi Board members, central government officials and the WRLC Project teams. Both events successfully created space for diverse stakeholders to join into dialogue, relationship building, and form new connections to amplify our collective impact.







## 1.4 Lessons so far

At the end of our first full year, our project leads, and the WRLC Secretariat reflected on what we have learnt, what we can apply to year two, and what these lessons might mean for others following us in this work in other parts of Aotearoa.

We would say:

1. **Partnership** is hard to achieve when not all partners start on an equal footing. Mana whenua input is critical, but project timelines don't always allow for the degree of participation required.
2. It's a slow job getting us all to work together, **relationships and trust** underpin everything, and while they can't be rushed, they save much more time in the long run.
3. **Resourcing** is a careful balance for partners – working on the WRLC versus business-as-usual work.
4. **Funding** is a thorny issue, but for most of the issues we are addressing in our work programme, it will cost the region far more later, if not addressed now, together.
5. **Cross-agency project teams** made up of local government, central government, Iwi/Māori and the private sector provides the most effective way to look at different opportunities and issues.
6. **Collaboration** to develop regionally consistent processes, information and tools is having far-reaching benefits across the region for the efficiency, equity, and effectiveness, beyond the delivery of the project outputs.
7. Clear **communication** messages are essential, especially reminding people about the reasons for the work, and its scope.
8. Regional collaboration/cooperation is full of promise – next year we will be leveraging the promise to land the **commitment to delivery**.

An aerial photograph of a town, likely Wellington, New Zealand, with a dense residential and commercial area. In the background, there are large, forested mountains under a clear sky. The foreground shows some blurred greenery and a road. The text 'Section 2: The Wellington Regional Leadership Committee Compliance' is overlaid in the top left corner in white and blue.

## Section 2: The Wellington Regional Leadership Committee Compliance

## 2.1 How did we spend our money?

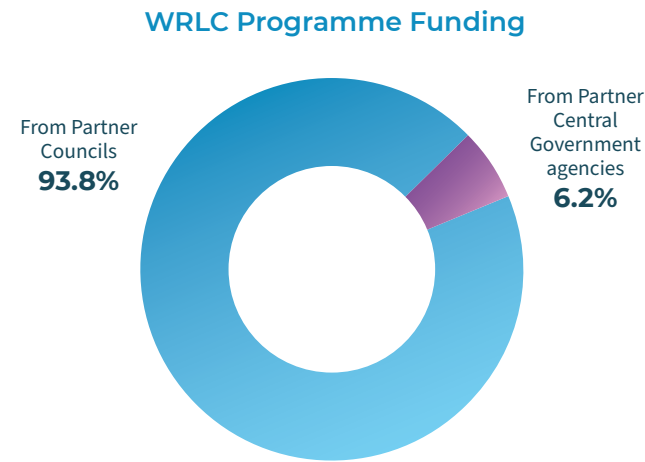
The WLRC and its work programme is funded through a couple of mechanisms.

The main focus of the WRLC Secretariat is project delivery and project funding is a key focus for us. A number of projects have a regional impact, and some may also be nationally significant. Some are oriented towards a local council area. The project's emphasis determines how they are funded, and the WRLC's level of interest in their financial management.

### 2.1.2 Operational funding

The WRLC operational costs are funded by all partner councils through both regional council rates and a separate contribution from Horowhenua District Council who are not in the rating district along with a contribution from central government. This can be seen in Diagram 3 below.

DIAGRAM 3: WRLC OPERATIONAL FUNDING BY FUNDER TYPE



### 2.1.3 Project Funding

All councils contribute to projects with a regional impact, based on the proportion of their population in the region. Central government partners also contribute project funding to some projects with a regional impact, and of national significance. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD), Kāinga Ora and Waka Kotahi have provided or committed funds for specific projects.

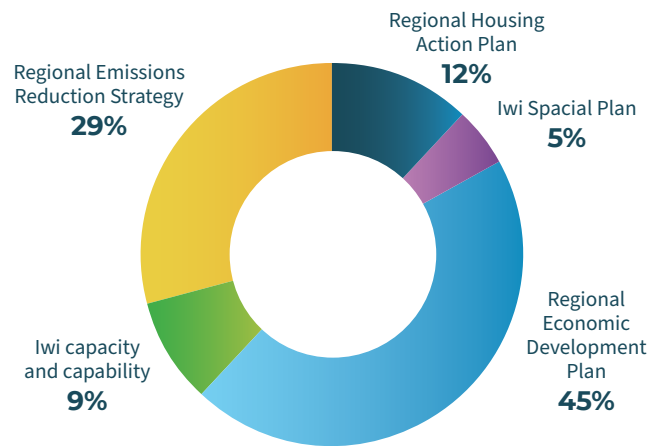
Due to this shared funding mechanism, the WRLC Secretariat is responsible for monitoring and reporting project financial management.

Projects that have a local focus are funded by the lead agency councils. While the WRLC has an interest in these projects' financial, they do not have responsibility for them.

Project costs are initially estimated at early stages of the project lifecycle, and the costs go through iterative cycles as the planning process matures. Approvals of cost provisions are an important part of the project authorisation process. This provides checks and balances that project teams are being careful with their project cost estimates, projects are scoped at an affordable level and project partners know what costs they are committing themselves to. While there is an abundance of thought and care in the costing process, the true costs cannot be known until the project is actually being delivered. The WRLC Secretariat's regular project status reporting helps to monitor this.

The summary of funding managed by the WRLC Secretariat for regional projects that were expected to start in 2021-2022 can be seen in Diagram 4 below.

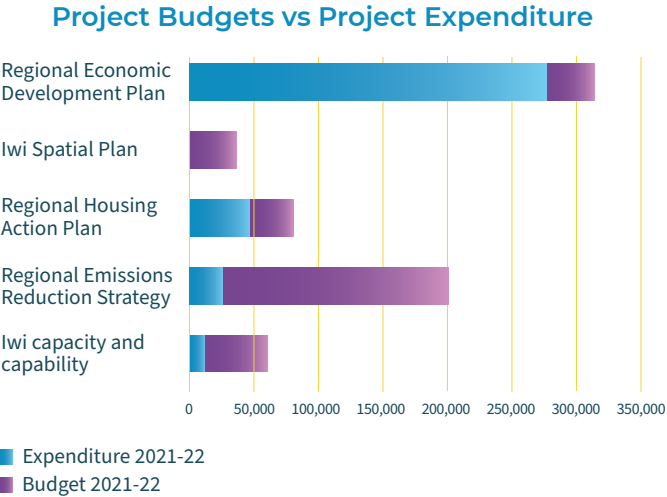
DIAGRAM 4: WRLC PROJECT BUDGETS  
Regional Projects – Budgets 2021-22





The rate of project expenditure against budget is often a good indicator of progress against schedule. This is true for our projects. Diagram 5 shows how projects are tracking, noting that some projects are multiyear projects therefore we would not expect all the funds to be spent in this year.

**DIAGRAM 5: WRLC PROJECT BUDGETS VS EXPENDITURE IN 2021-2022**



## 2.2 Who are we?

The WRLC is currently made up of representatives from the following:

- Local government representatives – Carterton District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Horowhenua District Council, Hutt City Council, Kāpiti Coast District Council, Masterton District Council, Porirua City Council, South Wairarapa District Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Wellington City Council
- Iwi representatives – Rangitāne Tu Mai Rā Trust, Te Runanga O Toa Rangatira Inc, Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Atiawaka ki Whakarongotai Charitable Trust, Te Runanga o Raukawa, Muaupoko Tribal Authority
- Central government representatives – Minister Megan Woods (Minister of Housing) and Minister Michael Wood (Minister of Transport)
- Independent Chair – Hon. Tracey Martin

The WLRC Secretariat includes a number of roles and is responsible for managing the process and work programme of the WRLC including WRLC meetings and agendas, project management, reporting, stakeholder relations and communications and engagement.

### Telling our story so far



Our project leads collaborated on a [video to tell our work story](#) (23min)

Find out more on the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee at: [www.wrlc.org.nz](http://www.wrlc.org.nz)

