



# The Westpac Wellbeing Series 2019.



# Foreword.



## **Dominick Stephens**

**Chief Economist, Westpac New Zealand**

I am a fan of the Government's shift to a Wellbeing Budget approach – I think this is an idea whose time has come. The concept of wellbeing refers to our overall quality of life. It is best summed up by the saying that “Money can buy a bed, but not a good night's sleep.” Measuring the economy is like counting our beds, whereas measuring wellbeing is like assessing the quality of our sleep. This is a worthy goal – after all, the whole point of having an economy is to maximise people's wellbeing. But it is also an ambitious project, fraught with potential pitfalls.

At each of our regional wellbeing presentations we sought feedback on how to build local wellbeing. Hearing from people at the coalface of health, police, iwi, charities, local government and others was humbling. My summary of what I heard from people is that they want an approach to wellbeing that is **co-operative, coherent, and consistent**.

Co-operation, be it between local authorities and government or between people within a community, was the strongest single theme. Coherence of government policies was also seen as key. The success stories seemed to involve multiple agencies working together for a common goal. Finally, people wanted consistency of government policy. All too often the election of a new government causes sudden lurches in policy, and this can create uncertainty for regional leaders.

I hope that the perspectives gleaned on our travels, and summarised here, prove useful as the Government develops its approach to wellbeing.

I'd like to thank the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and representatives of the Treasury for supporting and participating in the events.



## **Sharron Lloyd**

**General Manager, Trans-Tasman Business Circle**

The Circle is proud to be a growth partner for our region, providing a platform for the delivery of strategic thinking for business and government leaders across Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

The New Zealand Government's release of the Wellbeing Budget earlier in the year marked a new era in government focus. The Budget represents a fundamental change in what we choose to measure and how we measure it, seeking to address long-term issues and improve overall wellbeing. The Circle was keen to highlight the Government's commitment to placing wellbeing at the pinnacle of New Zealand public policy by engaging community organisations and business in a multi-disciplinary dialogue throughout New Zealand.

We are proud to partner with Circle longstanding member, Westpac New Zealand, to bring you this important discussion, and acknowledge Karen Silk, Dominick Stephens and Andrew Bashford for their support which has made this series possible.

# Executive Summary.

The Westpac Wellbeing Series was a four-stop regional roadshow with panel briefings held in Northland, Waikato, Manawatu and Canterbury. The aim of the series was to explain the concept of wellbeing, to start discussions about the state of wellbeing in each region, and to gather thoughts from leaders in each region about what might be done to improve wellbeing.

This summary provides insights from each regional meeting. For each region we recap the state of wellbeing locally, based on data provided by Infometrics, an economic consultancy. Next we summarise the panel discussion and comments from audiences about local wellbeing.

## The overarching themes from these regional meetings were:

- The Wellbeing Budget represents a good start for the regions, but needs to be backed up by work at ground level.
- The concept of wellbeing fits well with Te Ao Maori. However, a Maori approach may emphasise different dimensions of wellbeing such as spiritual wellbeing and intergenerational wellbeing.
- Overall wellbeing is best served by collaboration between government agencies, and between central and regional government.
- Key decisions on wellbeing should be made locally.
- Community-based approaches to wellbeing work well, but progress on this is slow.
- Business has a part to play by collaborating with government and community groups.
- Environmental wellbeing can be a driver of economic and social wellbeing.
- Maori wellbeing is typically lower than wellbeing for other ethnic groups in the same region.
- Addressing mental health issues is a key factor in improving communities' resilience and togetherness.
- Care should be taken when interpreting wellbeing statistics, which can be misleading at a regional level.
- There is a risk that "what gets measured gets done", while less measurable forms of wellbeing get less attention.

“ Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials.

It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

– Robert Kennedy, University of Kansas,  
March 18, 1968

”

# Canterbury | Wednesday 9 October.

The Canterbury event featured a keynote address by Hon Grant Robertson on the Wellbeing Budget. The key points were:

- Wellbeing is embedded at every stage of the Budget process.
- Priorities are set based on wellbeing analysis, evidence and expert advice.
- The aim of the Wellbeing Budget approach is to break down agency silos and work across government.
- The Wellbeing Budget balances the needs of the present with key long-term outcomes.

## The state of wellbeing in Canterbury – presentation by Dominick Stephens.

- Wellbeing in Canterbury is at or above the national average across all domains.
- Canterbury rates highly for safety – Selwyn District has the lowest crime rate in New Zealand.
- Canterbury’s rating for jobs and earnings is lower than the national average, because a higher proportion of the population works in declining industries and the skilled worker rate is lower than average.
- Canterbury rates poorly for civil engagement and governance, due to low voter turnout in local elections.

## Panel discussion.

### Participants.

- **Lianne Dalziel**, Christchurch Mayor
- **David Meates**, Canterbury DHB Chief Executive
- **Supt. John Price**, Canterbury Police District Commander
- Moderated by **Andrew Bashford**, Westpac NZ Acting General Manager of Commercial, Corporate and Institutional banking

### Key panel insights.

- Putting children at the centre of policy is the right thing to do.
- The Christchurch mosque shooting was one of our darkest days but it brought us closer together.
- The governance group established in the wake of the shooting has reviewed the last 10 years of emergency management and analysed agency data to help plan for the future.
- The key to successful emergency management has been to work cooperatively across government agencies.

- We need to ask what strengths exist in the community, and how we build on these.
- It’s important to grow resilience and self-sufficiency within communities.

## Panel question and answer session.

### How do you feel your region is performing in terms of wellbeing outcomes?

- Canterbury organisations and citizens are putting their heart and soul into dealing with what has happened over the last 10 years, and extra government funding is now making it possible to build resilience.
- The region’s wellbeing levels have taken a real knock. The region is trying really hard to improve current wellbeing levels, but progress is slow and there is a lot of work to do.
- Wellbeing statistics have the potential to be misleading, and could cause more harm than good. For example, Canterbury’s hospital admissions rate is low, but that does not indicate a healthy population. Instead, it could be because Canterbury makes more use of community facilities rather than hospitals. Canterbury’s high use of antidepressants suggests mental health in the region is much worse than the statistics suggest.

### To what extent do you think the living standards framework and wellbeing approach will help improve your region’s outcomes?

- Significantly. It’s important to have short, medium and long term outcomes and an evidence-based approach.
- Hugely, as long as it is adopted by all future governments. If it’s scrapped by the next government, then it will fail.

### Questions to the panel from the audience:

- Should we strive to grow Christchurch’s population faster than projected to help drive growth and overcome skills challenges?
- What are you most optimistic about for your respective areas in Canterbury? And your biggest concerns?
- How important is the environment when it comes to wellbeing?
- With growth in Selwyn and Waimakariri, and infrastructure spend needed in Christchurch to help improve wellbeing, is now the right time to establish a super city?
- Based on the Government’s budget surplus, will it update the population-based funding for CDHB sooner than projected?

# Northland | Wednesday 23 October.

## The state of wellbeing in Northland – presentation by Dominick Stephens.

- Northland scores low or very low on every dimension of wellbeing except environment.
- Northland rated poorly for knowledge and skills due to having the lowest rate of early childhood education in New Zealand, and a low rate of school leavers achieving NCEA level 2 or higher.
- Northland rates very poorly for housing, as rents are high relative to incomes and the home ownership rate is low.
- Northland rates poorly on social connections, partly due to high school truancy rates, long commute times, and low rates of internet access.
- Health outcomes and incomes in Northland are well below national averages.

## Panel discussion.

### Participants.

- **Peter Tyan**, Foundation North CEO
- **Karleen Everitt**, Te Putea Whakatupu Trust General Manager

### Key panel insights.

- Change in the system is multi-faceted. It needs strong evidence and research together with good advocacy and bringing the right people together to generate momentum.
- There is amazing commitment and passion, inspiration and hope in Northland to ensure we increase our own wellbeing.
- A spiritual index already exists within Maori communities. It is intergenerational and starts at home with community-led action.
- There's an overwhelming consensus that locally made decisions will lead to the best outcomes and that local communities need to take matters into their own hands.
- *"We have done so much, we still need to do more, we have gone a long way but we still have a long way to go".*

## Panel question and answer session.

### How do you feel your region is performing in terms of wellbeing outcomes?

- Quite well. Better than the Infometrics data suggests.
- Northland is a diverse region. We have large areas especially in the Far North where there is real social deprivation, predominantly around housing and health.

- Based on the criteria developed, the region is not doing well, but there may be more local community involvement that is positive but not being captured.

### To what extent do you think the living standards framework and wellbeing approach will help improve your region's outcomes?

- It depends on how it is implemented. The measures need to be well thought out, and implementation needs to be evidence-based.
- It's a good start. It needs to be more regionally-based within Northland due to the large variances. It also needs to be supported by central government funding, with the flexibility for localised decisions to be made as to how any funding is allocated.
- It will create a better understanding of links between social and economic outcomes.

### Other comments from the audience and panel:

- If the land is well cared for, all will be well. That should be the starting point, and everything will flow on from there.
- The council is doing a good job given financial restraints that we have, but we need a freer hand on how to spend funding.
- Northland needs more funding than other regions, given the deprivation levels in the region, but needs tino rangatiratanga over how the spend the money.
- Health funding in New Zealand is largely based on population rather than the health status of the region. This means less healthy regions like Northland have little a funding shortfall and little opportunity to close the gaps.

# Waikato | Thursday 24 October.

## The state of wellbeing in Waikato – presentation by Dominick Stephens.

- Wellbeing in southern Waikato is significantly lower than in northern Waikato across a number of dimensions.
- Waikato as a whole scores poorly for safety, due to high road fatalities, a high crime rate, and low work safety.
- Health outcomes in Waikato are below the national average, as are incomes.
- Housing wellbeing in Waikato is above the national average, and is much higher than in neighbouring Auckland.

## Panel discussion.

### Participants.

- **Tim Ng**, NZ Treasury Chief Economic Adviser
- **Chris Joblin**, Tainui Holdings CEO
- **Professor Holly Thorpe**, University of Waikato School of Health
- Moderated by **Mark Wisnewski**, Westpac NZ Senior Manager Corporate Banking & Property Finance

### Key panel insights.

- Waikato is a multicultural region where wellbeing is understood very differently, and can be related to environment, whanau, religion and spirituality.
- Drawing up subjective and objective dimensions of wellbeing are a challenge.
- The community is nervous and divided on change and the future.
- Waikato features some of the wealthiest and most impoverished communities in New Zealand.
- It is also an epicentre for the climate change challenges we face as a country.

## Panel question and answer session.

### How do you feel your region is performing in terms of wellbeing outcomes?

- It's performing well in some communities but quite lacking in others such as Huntly, Ngaruawahia, and South Waikato.
- We are similar to most regions in New Zealand where we are "fighting fires", which inhibits our ability to be proactive, but we are moving closer to being more proactive and less reactive.
- We are not yet measuring or benchmarking well enough to know.

### To what extent do you think the living standards framework and wellbeing approach will help improve your region's outcomes?

- The framework provides a means of having a broader conversation around programs and projects.
- With happier, healthier people, we will find that our whole region benefits through having more engaged citizens who are able to contribute in whatever way they can, which doesn't just mean through paid employment.
- It is important that this is not just a "top-down" approach. The Waikato Wellbeing Project is a community-led initiative that will be important in ensuring a collaborative, systems-based approach-helping "bottom-up" to meet "top-down"
- Waikato has a large Māori population, with their own set of wellbeing drivers, so the framework will likely benefit the region.

### Questions to the panel from the audience:

- What work is being done in the background to tweak the wellbeing measures over the next few decades to make sure metrics are getting better?
- We need to consider the impact of technology in the future. Is Treasury looking at the whole tax framework in light of data and new ways of thinking?
- What does wellbeing mean to high performance sport and youth in sport?

# Manawatu | Thursday 24 October.

## The state of wellbeing in Manawatu / Whanganui – presentation by Dominick Stephens.

- Wellbeing is distributed unevenly across Manawatu/Whanganui, with Whanganui and Tararua Districts generally scoring lower.
- Manawatu/Whanganui has particularly low wellbeing in the areas of health and income and consumption.
- Manawatu/Whanganui's health rating was dragged down by poor drinking water quality, particularly in Feilding.
- Civic engagement and housing wellbeing are significantly higher than the national average in Manawatu/Whanganui.

## Panel discussion.

### Participants.

- **Stacey Wymer**, Director of the Living Standards Implementation Programme Office, NZ Treasury
- **Kathryn Cook**, MidCentral District Health Board CEO
- **James Stewart**, Stewart Dairylands Managing Director
- **Wiremu Te Awe Awe**, Councillor, Horizons Regional Council.
- Moderated by **Andrew Bashford**, Westpac NZ Acting General Manager of Commercial, Corporate and Institutional banking

### Key panel insights.

- Connectedness, engagement, collaboration and partnerships are all vital.
- The farming community feels under pressure, this is affecting wellbeing.
- There is concern about a lack of access to health services, especially in mental health.
- Innovation and technology represent opportunities to be explored.
- The regions need support to feel empowered and we should look at successful examples, such as the Porirua Development (a partnership between Government, Porirua City Council and Ngāti Toa Rangatira to improve public housing in western Porirua).

## Panel question and answer session.

### How do you feel your region is performing in terms of wellbeing outcomes?

- There is a lot of work needed to reduce the inequities evident in statistics, particularly for Whanganui.

- From a healthcare perspective, until we can actually break down the regional data to see the statistics for each area we can't accurately answer this question. There is a vast difference between parts of Palmerston North and Whanganui or Tararua, for example.
- There are more opportunities in this region than ever but we must ensure we focus on inclusion so that 'wellbeing' is experienced by all.
- There is a good standard of living for families and small city benefits such as ease of travel, outdoor recreation and diversity. Manawatu has a good network of leaders confronting environmental concerns and pushing on with economic growth, a good housing market and a strong, diverse business sector.

### To what extent do you think the living standards framework and wellbeing approach will help improve your region's outcomes?

- Not a lot will change unless early education intervention is made the foundation for any change.
- One suggestion is mediated modelling to work through "what if" and "then what" scenarios. This might mean more money targeted at social services and infrastructure.
- The current government's holistic approach is good, however the impact on our farmers of adhering to their climate change goals needs to be considered.
- We need to stop talking and start doing. We all know what needs to be done and which areas of our region need attention, so hiding behind statistics that don't show up the real issues will just slow down the real benefits we could achieve through the framework.

### Questions to the panel from the audience:

- Is Treasury planning to provide information to the local government and community?
- Considering addiction concerns in the region, what are your thoughts on cannabis legislation for New Zealand?
- How will wellbeing keep Maori, youth and an ageing population engaged in ongoing education and the future of work?

# Appendix.

## Attendees.

Canterbury		
<b>74 Attendees from 39 organisations:</b>		
Agpac Ltd	David Barker & Co.	Quinovic Property
Air New Zealand	Duncan Cotterill	Randstad
Beca Limited	Duns	Ruamoko Solutions
Boffa Miskell Ltd	Environment Canterbury	Seipp Construction Ltd
Canterbury District Health Board	Eyeopro Group	Stepping Stone Trust
Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce	Fotocopy Ltd	SVA Foundation
Canterbury Museum	GHD	The Instillery
Chase Commercial	Kannangara Thomson	The Vicarage
Christchurch City Council	Kordia	Tonkin & Taylor International
Christchurch International Airport	Lincoln University	Trans - Tasman Business Circle
ChristchurchNZ	Miller Gale & Winter	University of Canterbury
Clyne & Bennie Ltd	New Zealand Police	Vocus
Crombie Lockwood (NZ) Limited	Peppertree Preschools Ltd	Westpac New Zealand
Northland		
<b>16 attendees from 15 organisations:</b>		
Beca Limited	Northland District Health Board	The Orchard Business and Events Hub
Extension 350	Northland Inc	The Treasury
Foundation North	Northland Regional Council	Trans - Tasman Business Circle
Marsden Maritime Holdings Ltd	Provincial Development Unit	Westpac New Zealand
New Zealand Trade & Enterprise	Te Putea Whakatupu Trust	Whangarei District Council
Waikato		
<b>50 attendees from 37 organisations including:</b>		
Accident Compensation Corporation	High Performance Sport New Zealand	Trans - Tasman Business Circle
Australian Trade & Investment Commission (AUSTRADE)	HSB Government Relations	Trust Waikato
Beca Limited	Kordia	University of Waikato
BTW	Ports Of Auckland	Waikato Regional Council
Cater Plus	Seed Waikato	Waikato/Bay of Plenty Cancer Society of New Zealand
CBD Developments	Tainui Group Holdings	Wel Energy Trust
Dairy Women's Network	Te Waka: Waikato's regional economic development agency	Westpac New Zealand
Downer New Zealand	The Treasury	
H2R Consulting	Tompkins Wake Ltd	

## Manawatu

### 115 attendees from more than 52 organisations:

Aberdeen	GHD	Poutama Trust
Amorini NZ Ltd	Green Law	Property Brokers Limited
Arohanui Hospice	Horizons Regional Council	Screen Vistas
Ashhurst Engineering	Innes Dean Tararua Law Limited	Southern Cross Healthcare Group
BB Construction	Just Zilch	Sustainable Futures NZ Ltd
BDO	Manawatu Chamber of Commerce	Talent Central
Beca Limited	Manawatu District Council	Tararua District Council
Central Economic Development Agency	MAS	The Treasury
CR Law	Massey University	Totally Vets LTD
Craigs Investment Partners	McCann Creative Ltd	Toyota New Zealand
Devlin Cameron & Hayes Limited	MidCentral District Health Board	Universal College of Learning (UCOL)
Etech	Naylor Lawrence & Associates	VisaPlex
First Property Consultancy	O'Fee Next Level Accounting	Waipakuranui Incorporation
Fitzgerald Financial Limited	Pain Management and Rehabilitation Services	Westpac New Zealand
Fitzherbert Rowe	Palmerston North Airport	Whanganui and Partners
FMG	Pierce Projects	Yatai NZ LTD
Food HQ	Stewart Dairylands Limited	
International Pacific College	Supporting Families in Mental Illness	