

Thematic analysis of Kaikōura community strategies and plans

By

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Introduction

Kaikōura requires a clear community development vision. Due partly to the 2011 Canterbury and 2016 Kaikōura earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic, various community strategies and plans have often been developed. Despite community input and stakeholder discussion, there is a sense from some that there is insufficient clarity or mandate from the community to move forward with a clear vision. Rather than engaging with the community once more to ask about community interests, values and priorities, the Kaikōura Economic Recovery Group has sponsored a project to undertake a stocktake of existing community strategies and plans. A key question then was *what can we learn from previous community-developed strategies and plans over the last 15 years?*

This report sets out the findings of a thematic analysis of selected community strategies and plans and reflections from community stakeholder hui where the key findings were discussed. The report aims to support discussion about ‘what works, what does not and why’ and support future planning. This short report is divided into four sections:

- *Approach* - how the thematic analysis was undertaken;
- *Themes* - key findings from the thematic analysis;
- *Hui participant feedback on the thematic analysis* – reflections on the key findings; and
- *Suggested next steps* – areas to support future planning and action

Approach

This section sets out the activities undertaken.

Data collection

Community groups, health and social service providers and mana whenua were invited to share any community strategies and plans (from the last 15 years). A sample of documents was provided by Sarah Breadmore from Te Hā o Mātauranga on behalf of the Kaikōura Economic Recovery Group¹. The documents reviewed (in no particular order) included:

- The Pōha Project;
- Kaikoura Community Action Plan;
- Kaikōura Community Hub;
- Education Kaikōura Strategic Plan;
- Reimagine Kaikoura: A sustainable future for the Kaikoura District;
- Scoping study: Towards a Kaikōura community-led arts and culture strategy;
- Kaikōura Health Te Hā o Te Ora;
- Waka Ako;
- Volume 1: Kaikōura District Council Long Term Plan 2021 – 2031;
- Canterbury Clinical Network: Kaikoura – a model of care;
- The Mayfair Arts and Culture: Entertain Educate Inform Inspire; and

¹ Kaikōura Economic Recovery Group is made up of Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, business representatives, local community organisations, local environmental groups, Kaikōura District Council and has a wide community representation

- Kaikōura Dark Sky Trust - Project Plan.

Data analysis

A thematic analysis of community plans was undertaken to review existing work. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework², each plan was carefully read then initial codes were created representing the key features of each strategy and plan. A timeline of community strategies and plans and significant community events was also created. The initial codes were collated into five themes which highlight similarities and differences between the documents. The thematic analysis was presented at Community Networkers Meeting on 8 March 2022, where stakeholders reflected on the key findings and considered the next steps.

Limitations

The thematic analysis has the following limitations:

- Only one document was from before 2016, and at the time of analysis, no documents from Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura were available; and
- The documents do not necessarily provide access to extensive discussions and consultations before or after each document was created.

Themes

This section sets out five themes that capture insights from a thematic analysis of community strategies and plans.

Theme 1: Challenging times

Various documents paint a rich picture of the challenges, opportunities, issues and problems facing Kaikōura. These include a small, diverse community characterised by a large retiree population, community silos, seasonal workforce and dependence on tourism, wool, crayfish and paua exporting.

Kaikōura's dependence on tourism, relative isolation and lack of post-secondary educational opportunities leaves it vulnerable to outside events such as the 2011 Canterbury and 2016 Kaikōura earthquakes, the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of climate change on the roading network and critical infrastructure. This vulnerability can lead to significant economic and social disruption and amplify the inequities created by the lack of affordable housing and a transitory workforce.

Community strategies and plans were often created in response to problems or challenges. Nevertheless, most documents adopted a strengths-based approach, recognised the importance of the natural environment to social, economic and cultural well-being, and

² Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

highlighted opportunities to strengthen education or access central government funding to address community priorities. More recently, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the growing relationship between the Kaikōura District Council and Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura have been highlighted.

Theme 2: Significant planning efforts

The community has a long history of developing strategies and plans to collectively mobilise community strengths and resources to respond to challenges (See Figure 1). These plans address various community priorities such as children and young persons, meeting housing needs, using art to facilitate collective discussion about community identity, and ensuring a connected community with access to information and opportunities. Some plans are more operational, and others are more aspirational, as evidenced by relatively high-level goals or output or activity-focused goals.

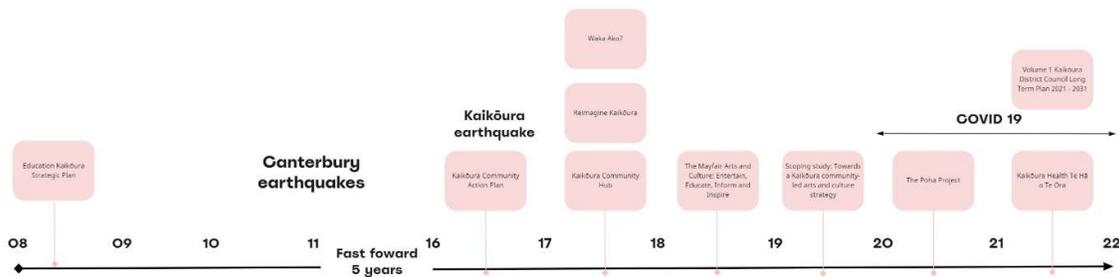


Figure 1: Timeline of community strategies, plans and events (2008 – 2022)

Theme 3: Whole community focus

Various consultative methods such as hui, social media, or surveys captured community voices about priorities and outcomes. Most community strategies and plans adopted a *whole community focus*. That is, either recognised that achieving sector-specific outcomes such as education required collaboration with wider community stakeholders or attempted to develop comprehensive, multi-level strategies and plans. In this way, most documents acknowledged the inter-relationships between challenges and opportunities, sought outcomes across social, economic and environmental domains and called for meaningful partnerships to advance work. The strength of a whole community focus is the ability to develop sustainable solutions, avoid unintended consequences and effectively harness the skills and resources of the community. However, there are at least three challenges when adopting a whole community focus, and these were rarely acknowledged in the documents:

- (1) Losing a sense of the whole when developing strategic initiatives by effectively creating a laundry list of actions that may or may not fit together. While common threads run through the community strategies and plans, these do not necessarily create the required coherence to ensure that actions to achieve a strategic objective do not undermine other strategic objectives;

- (2) Struggling to leverage resources, insights and capabilities of partners and maintaining a collaborative advantage – it is commonly believed that up to 70% of collaborations fail or produce disappointing results (see Gray and Prudy, 2018)³; and
- (3) Failing to make explicit the boundaries often implicit in a whole community focus and reflecting on the implications of marginalising or excluding issues or stakeholders from the community strategies and plans. This signals the need for meaningful community engagement and ensuring that perspectives commonly sidelined in usual consultation/planning processes are given due weight.

Theme 4: From plans to action

Figure 1 highlights how the Kaikōura community has come together, held consultations, asked the community for input, and worked collaboratively to respond to challenges and opportunities.

However, an analysis of the documents shows that sections devoted to implementation were underdeveloped or missing (there were some exceptions), raising questions about the ability of the strategies and plans to have an impact. A lack of operationalisation was a feature of many strategies and plans, with none setting out a theory of change⁴ and little discussion about required capabilities and specific contributions of identified partners/stakeholders. In addition, few documents identified barriers to implementation and considered how these might be addressed.

Overall, the community strategies and plans lacked detail about governance, management and evaluation. The lack of these systems significantly limits the adaptability of any strategy or plan, particularly as the community context changes. A few strategies and plans did include the need for a backbone organisation to direct and control implementation, and at least one did seek funding for this function.

Theme 5: Reflecting and building on success

Figure 1 suggests that the development of community strategies and plans was 'event-driven in response to a crisis or problem. Of course, creating plans is costly in terms of time and resources, and over time community can become fatigued with being asked about concerns and aspirations (particularly if there is little measurable progress). A feature of the documents was that successive strategies and plans only implicitly acknowledged previous attempts to address community priorities⁵ despite common threads such as a concern for children and young persons. Indeed, it is unclear to what extent the strategies and plans

³ Gray, B., and Purdy, J. (2018). *Collaborating for our future: multi-stakeholder partnerships for solving complex problems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴ A theory of change is a graphic which depicts a shared understanding of how resources are leveraged to create outputs that are then used by stakeholders to co-create desired outcomes.

⁵ Although this understandable for sector specific strategies such as for the arts and health services.

built on each other - leveraging previous 'wins' or 'lessons' when formulating strategic initiatives or actions.

A related issue was a lack of space for strategy evaluation/reflection. While some documents did include measures of progress or indicators of success, there were no obvious processes for monitoring and evaluation activities and sharing lessons with community stakeholders and mana whenua.

Community stakeholder hui feedback

This section reports on feedback from hui participants about the key findings. Feedback includes:

- We need to tell and celebrate success stories and use these to build for the future;
- There is value in reflecting on what is working well and what might be the next step;
- Taking a 'small wins' approach to build and develop trust and confidence, learn about community capabilities and help new people/groups/stakeholders understand how they might support work to date; and
- Strong partnerships are key to success, including the involvement of Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura

Suggested next steps

Based on the thematic analysis and hui discussion, there are several next steps to consider:

- Adopt a 'small wins' approach and pay particular attention to strategy/plan implementation;
- Develop a Theory of Change for new initiatives - useful as a planning, improvement and accountability tool. See Rogers (2004)⁶;
- Sharpen up strategic objectives and outcomes with collaboration in mind following Bryson, Ackermann and Eden (2016)⁷
 - Define:
 - *Core goals* (specific to each partner) - how collaboration helps to achieve these

⁶ Rogers, P. (2014). Theory of Change, *Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation 2*, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence. Available online at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/747-theory-of-change-methodological-briefs-impact-evaluation-no-2.html>

⁷ Bryson, J. M., Ackermann, F., & Eden, C. (2016). Discovering collaborative advantage: The contributions of goal categories and visual strategy mapping. *Public Administration Review*, 76(6), 912-925.

- *Core shared goals* (common to all partners) - the reason for collaboration
 - *Public value goals* - positive spin-offs beyond the collaboration's remit;
- Express core goals and core shared goals as a *goal system* to show how each goal complements or augments one another so partners can understand their place. Develop indicators of success/progress for each so that implementation can be tracked, outcomes evaluated and performance managed for improvement and accountability;
- Where necessary 'lift up' low-level goals (phrased as outputs or activities) so that the rationale and motivation are clear and the impact of successfully pursuing them is explicit; and
- Collectively review previous strategies and plans. Reflect on the following questions and note any lessons for going forward:
 - What blocks implementation, and how can these blocks be overcome?
 - What aids implementation, and how can these aids be amplified?
 - What resources, capabilities or relationships need to be introduced or developed to enable implementation?

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