Towards a Wellbeing Economy in Porirua, Aotearoa New Zealand

This report summarises learnings from a pilot case study that explored policies of Te Hiko for building a wellbeing economy in Porirua.

(November 2022)
Introduction

This presentation is for people and communities striving for human and ecological flourishing through wellbeing economy policies.

The Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll) published a *Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide* in 2021 to help people and communities like you.

We report here on a pilot case study, in which a WEAll team worked with a community innovation centre to explore how the elements in the *Guide* can work in practice.

The pilot case study was based in Porirua, in Aotearoa New Zealand.
The Place of Porirua

Before human arrival, the place now named Porirua was the home of diverse natural ecosystems.

Today, the city of Porirua is built around a natural harbour on the western coast at the lower end of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The city is surrounded by hills and a generally rural environment used for farming, horticulture, forestry, public parks and other purposes.
Ngāti Toa Rangatira

Ngāti Toa Rangatira are the local iwi [Māori tribe] who have held mana whenua [demonstrated authority] in the region since the 1820s.

Ngāti Toa Rangatira exerts its intergenerational rights and responsibilities of kaitiakitanga [guardianship, stewardship, trusteeship] within its rohe [tribal region] that are a source of spiritual, cultural, social and physical sustenance for Ngāti Toa Rangatira and the local community.

Our project acknowledges and respects these rights and responsibilities.
The People of Porirua

The foundation of our project is the people of Porirua.

The **2018 Census** recorded 56,519 residents in Porirua. It also reflected the rich diversity of its communities.

- 22.3 per cent of the people said they were Māori, compared to 16.5 per cent for the whole country.
- 26.3 per cent of the people said they belong to a Pacific Island community, compared to 8.1 per cent for the whole country.
Wesley Community Action

Wesley Community Action was established by the Methodist Church in 1952 to serve communities in the Wellington region.

In the 1990s, Wesley Community Action began working with people in Porirua, offering support services at a time of very high unemployment (the 1991 Census recorded an unemployment rate of 11.7% in Porirua).

Even in good times Wesley Community Action saw people unable to live well, trapped by an unsupportive economic system.
“It’s now even more clear that we need big systems change at local and global levels to sustain just and caring communities. The merging of economic, social, and environmental issues, and the related tipping point, means we’re in this together. We need to innovate and adapt fast; the existing orthodoxy has lost its value.”

– David Hanna and Peter Glensor

Annual Report 2019-20, p. 3
Based on its work alongside Porirua people, whānau [extended families] and communities for 30 years, Wesley Community Action created a Centre for Community Innovation in Porirua in 2020.

Housed in Cannons Creek (a suburb of Porirua), Te Hiko knows that community driven innovation, with the right support, can be the spark for people to find and carry out sustainable solutions to complex issues.
Te Hiko, the Centre for Community Innovation

Te Hiko works to create safe spaces for people, whānau and communities to explore their creativity for achieving systems change.

Its name come from the Māori word ‘hiko’: to flash; to stimulate; to snatch, grab, grasp; electrical, power, electronic, electric; lightning.

Te Hiko aims to support active sparking flashes of positive change in the communities of Porirua, and in the economic systems that currently restrict and exclude too many.
The Wellbeing Economy Alliance

Wellbeing Economy Alliance Aotearoa is part of the global WEAll movement, which promotes a vision that economies around the world are redesigned to create shared wellbeing for people and planet by 2040.

As part of that vision, WEAll has published the Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide to help people design policies for wellbeing economies.
Collaboration for a Pilot Case Study

In 2022, WEAll Aotearoa asked Te Hiko if they collaborate in a pilot case study, to test the usefulness of the *Wellbeing Economic Policy Design Guide* for people coming together to create wellbeing economy policies.

This report is a result from that collaboration. It uses the framework in the *Guide* to present some key learnings from Te Hiko’s work in Porirua.
The **Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide** offers a framework with five inter-connected aspects of policy design: vision, strategy, policies, implementation and evaluation.

These five elements provide the structure for this report.

Developing a Wellbeing Vision
A Wellbeing Vision

The Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide (p. 12) states that wellbeing economy policy design begins with setting a different vision of progress beyond traditional indicators such as wealth and GDP growth.

“As such, a Wellbeing Vision is not something that can be imposed; it must be co-created with communities. This requires engagement with communities to understand what matters for their wellbeing, now and for generations to come.” (Policy Design Guide, p. 12)
What Matters for Wellbeing?

In 2007, Wesley Community Action called a community conversation in Porirua about what was driving a high demand for emergency food.

The big theme that emerged was the way the economy was draining resources out of Porirua through people being trapped in debt.
A New Vision

The community conversation shared ideas about a new vision for the economy in Porirua.

The key theme that emerged was that if the local economy was working well, it would allow people in Porirua to create from their skills and local resources the abundance needed to live well.

A local artist was employed to capture the facilitated conversation, and this evolved to produce the vision of community abundance shown on the next slide.
A Vision of Community Abundance
The Power of Process

15 years later, Te Hiko continues to follow that vision. Its power comes from the process that ensured it reflected the experience of the local community. Te Hiko have written about this importance of process.

“Our process is a taonga [treasure] to us. The ‘what’ we do is less important than the ‘how’ we do it. Our process is built up over what we have learnt over the last 30 years. It helps us to work in a way that brings out the best in whānau [families], hapori [communities] and ourselves.”
What Success Looks Like

The **Policy Design Guide** recommends finding appropriate indicators to measure and monitor changes in the community’s wellbeing priorities. Te Hiko has reflected on what success looks like, which has led to a focus on fostering changes in activities and behaviours:

“And we also know that much of this work is not about the success or number of individual projects – it is far more about practicing skills, ways of thinking, network building and resources uncovering that are needed to support the shift for new economic approaches.”
What Success Looks Like

The focus is to support people coming together to create, for example:

• More opportunities to see, name and value what we already have (see and feel our enoughness, noticing what we waste).
• More opportunities to see and grow what we share – our common spaces, our common resources.
• More opportunities to grow and strengthen diverse networks of people and resources that connect to or support this place.
• More opportunities to see, value and embed our living within this natural environment.
“We create a safe place for people to come together and talk about their own dreams. That is gold.”

Ruth Nonu
Designing a Wellbeing Economy Strategy
What is a Wellbeing Economy Strategy?

The **Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide** (p. 20) gives this definition of a wellbeing economy strategy.

“A theory of change which outlines concrete changes in the economy required to achieve your wellbeing goals.”

Te Hiko adopts a theory of change developed by one of its partners, **Inspiring Communities**.
Inspiring Communities is a group of people who have skills, expertise and experience in approaches based on community-led development.
A Strategy Based on Capability Development

This theory of change, and its commitment to community development, means that Te Hiko looks for projects where it can help people to expand their connections and capacities to act, organise, collaborate and grow.

True to its Māori name, Te Hiko looks for ‘sparks’ in the community that can ignite new personal and community capabilities for wellbeing.

A guiding phrase at Te Hiko is, “We create safe spaces for people to be creative.”
Whakawhanaungatanga

The 2007 community conversation called this whakawhanaungatanga. This is a Māori word for the practice of building relations. Bring people together to build social capital and other forms of community wealth.
Community Innovation

This strategy means that innovation is found from within the community.

“Community innovation is a spark that makes a break from the way things have normally been done – either small or large – that creates a positive impact in surprising and interconnected ways on the systems we are a part of. It emerges from a specific community and is shaped by that community’s knowledge and values.”

The next page lists seven key questions that guide Te Hiko on whether a proposed initiative fits its Wellbeing Economy strategy.
Seven Key Questions for Each Initiative

1. Are we privileging community voice?
2. Are we making new ideas (big and small) visible?
3. Are we testing ideas (big and small)?
4. Are we sharing, growing and debating ideas with others?
5. Are we contributing to bigger impact and growing capability?
6. Are we being respectful of people’s trauma and taking a healing approach?
7. Are we working in a Kaupapa Te Tiriti way to support decolonisation?
Two Footnotes on Questions 6 and 7

Questions 6 and 7 might not be clear for some international readers.

European colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand came to be founded on Te Tiriti o Waitangi [The Treaty of Waitangi] signed by representatives of the British Crown and by many Māori leaders in 1840. ‘Kaupapa Te Tiriti’ means honouring the foundations laid by the Treaty.

Land dispossession during colonisation, and experiences such as very high unemployment rates in the 1990s, mean some communities in the country have experienced intergenerational trauma that endures.
Te Hiko follows ‘The Wesley Way’.

This is a bilingual statement about 4 principles guiding all engagements of Wesley Community Action.

The Statement also sets out eight activities that give effect to the four principles.
Wellbeing Economy Activities and Behaviours

Te Hiko’s strategy means that it has paid careful attention to identifying economic activities and behaviours that contribute to wellbeing.

Consistent with the Policy Design Guide (p. 22), Te Hiko has worked with others to identify existing strengths and capacities in the communities of Porirua and to support initiatives that expand capabilities for wellbeing.

Against a background of cultural alienation and economic poverty, Te Hiko has designed safe spaces where people and communities can visualise new roles for themselves in a new Porirua economy.
Aligning Institutions and Stakeholders

Te Hiko has found that forming **intentional partnerships** with aligned institutions and stakeholders takes considerable time and skill.

- Te Hiko takes care that it always acts as an honourable partner.
- All partners are typically time-constrained and may be anxious about engaging outside business as usual.
- Te Hiko people found they had to unlearn some old ways of thinking and learn some new skills to be genuinely collaborative.
Porirua Partners

Te Hiko works with partners in Porirua and nearby who share a vision of supporting community-led innovation to expand wellbeing. This includes:

- Ngāti Toa Rangatira
- Porirua City Council
- Hutt City Council
- Kāinga Ora
- Inspiring Communities
- Todd Foundation
Managing Trade-offs and Power Dynamics

If a community organisation enters into a collaboration with a central government organisation, there is a large power imbalance.

Te Hiko had an experience where it (happily) shared knowledge about one of its highly successful initiatives.

The government partner drew on that shared knowledge to create a similar programme outside the partnership.

Te Hiko felt something really important was lost in this process.
“Too often decision-makers are the wrong person in the wrong place, removed from the local situation.”

Dennis Makalio
Assessing and Selecting Wellbeing Economy Policies
What are Wellbeing Economy Policies?

The Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide (p. 28) gives this definition of wellbeing economy policies.

“Specific government interventions that contribute to the achievement of wellbeing goals by influencing the behaviour of economic actors.”

The focus on government interventions is too narrow to capture the experience of Te Hiko.
What are Wellbeing Economy Policies?

Of course, any institution can design and carry out specific interventions for a wellbeing purpose.

This leads to an alternative definition of wellbeing economy policies:

Specific interventions by any institution that are purposefully designed to contribute to the achievement of wellbeing goals by influencing the behaviour of economic actors.
Local and Central Government

In the alternative definition, local and central governments are *examples* of institutions that design purposeful policies for wellbeing.

Nevertheless, the *distinctive* powers of governments mean their role in fostering a wellbeing economy cannot be downplayed.

This has certainly been Te Hiko’s experience during Wesley’s 30 years in Porirua.

Building a Wellbeing Economy needs everyone with all their ideas, passion and practical delivery. But the role of policy makers and government cannot be downplayed – they create incentives, they reward certain activities, they bring in money, and deploy it. Put together, policies shape the road on which our shared journey towards a Wellbeing Economy will travel.

Dr. Katherine Trebeck, WEAll Advocacy Lead

Intentional Partnerships

Community and government organisations offer distinctive capabilities for expanding wellbeing. This opens the door for *intentional partnerships* among different organisations willing to *collaborate* to co-design policies for a wellbeing economy. This is an essential element in Te Hiko’s work.

“Intentional partnerships is how we bring outside ideas and resources into our hapori [communities]. One of our key expertise at Te Hiko is helping to translate and mediate between different ways and speeds of thinking and working.”
Learning Partnerships

Te Hiko has developed intentional partnerships with Porirua City Council and its neighbouring Hutt City Council, and also with Kāinga Ora, the Todd Foundation and Inspiring Communities.

In these partnerships, a strong emphasis of Te Hiko is that the partners actively explore ‘how we can learn together’.

This reflects that communities are experts in their own experience, and so the partnerships must always be ready to learn from that expertise.
Assessing and Reforming Existing Policies

The commitment to learning partnerships means that Te Hiko regularly assesses policies on two levels:

- Can any of our own policies be improved to better deliver our strategy to foster community innovation and expand capabilities for wellbeing?
- Can any policies of our partners (including the policies of central government) be improved to better align with achieving our vision for a wellbeing economy?
Co-creating New Policies for a Wellbeing Economy

The best initiatives for Te Hiko are where partners have collaborated to support community innovation and the creativity surprises everyone.

This is how the sparks of community innovation burst into creative life!

The following section celebrates some examples of initiatives that have advanced Te Hiko’s wellbeing economy vision.
“Our most important partner is our grassroots community. This is not negotiable.”

Makerita Makapelu
Implementing Wellbeing Economy Policies
Implementing Policy

The **Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide** (p. 34) recognises that the achievement of a community’s wellbeing economy vision is a ‘bottom-up’ process, driven by transformations in activities and behaviours in all sections of society.

“Thus, empowering people to take the lead in designing, aligning, and monitoring wellbeing policy initiatives is important for effective implementation.”

*(Policy Design Guide, p. 34)*
Responding to Community Needs

Wesley Community Action began its journey towards wellbeing economy policy design in 2007, when demand in Porirua for emergency food was high, even though the economy was doing well by conventional measures.

The big issue was cycles of debt creating a downward spiral.
A Spiral of Debt and Isolation

People trapped in debt became isolated from family and friends.

People who were isolated became more likely to turn to debt.

The response was to create a course for people to come together to find a new way to take part in the local economy without debt.
Good Cents

The name of the course is Good Cents, which has run for more than ten years. It is not a traditional budgeting service; for example, it does not ask people for their income and spending information.

“We believe, and have seen over and over again in Good Cents, that people who are in financial stress are able to make amazing changes in their life if they have space to connect with others, and make mind shifts in the way they see themselves.”
Building Social Capital

Te Hiko has used the approach developed in the Good Cents initiative to connect with, or to create, programmes that use and build social capital.

- Just Change
- Fruit & Veggie Co-op
- Good Food
- New Zealand ‘P’ Pull
- Innovating Streets
- Common Ground
- Community Composting
- Tool Bank / Good Gardens
- WhānauFluence
- Porirua Promise
- Cannon Coin
- Urban Farming
- Ngahere Korowai
- Broject
- Time Bank
Empowering Localised Policy Implementation

The fundamental principle is:

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL ... NOW.

Whakawhanaungatanga is the Indigenous word for the practice of building relations.

This is built on empowering localised policy implementation – only local people can build relations among themselves.
Participatory Monitoring of Implementation

“The major goal is to conduct implementation in ways that are strategic and goal oriented, while also allowing space for adaptation or recourse if unexpected challenges arise.”


Te Hiko is careful to involve participants in talking about their experiences and their partnership with Te Hiko, which leads to reflection and change.
Good Cents

One of the Good Cents groups made a video of their experience of being part of the course.

The video is called *Making Change*.
Te Hiko also consults with wider community.

In June 2018, it hosted a community hui [Māori for gathering] to discuss the Good Cents courses.

Te Hiko made a video of that consultation, which includes interviews and quotes from participants in the hui.
“Good Cents was one of our first intentional steps to learn about growing better economic systems. It is part of the foundation of our work at Te Hiko to privilege local voice and co-design solutions to the issues people are experiencing.”

Kena Duignan
Evaluating Policy Impacts on Wellbeing
The *Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide* (p. 41) states recognises the importance of learning from both successes and failures on the journey towards a Wellbeing Economy.

“This process of learning-by-doing is about assessing improvements in social and ecological wellbeing as well as reflecting on and adapting the policy design process itself.” (*Policy Design Guide*, p. 40)
The Te Hiko emphasis on learning is informed by a theory of public sector services called Human Learning Systems, which in Aotearoa New Zealand was launched in November 2021.

“Because each person’s life is a unique, unpredictable and ever-changing complex system that creates outcomes (both good and bad), the work required to create outcomes is a continuous learning process.”

(Source: Human Learning Systems, p. 7)
Te Hiko collaborated with Human Learning Systems to develop a **case study** of the Good Cents approach to financial wellbeing.

This describes how learning was an essential element in creating Good Cents, strongly supported by its funder, the **Todd Foundation**.

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**Summary**

- At the heart of Good Cents is the belief that people are the experts in their own lives.
- We’ve learned that with the right support, communities can find positive ways of negotiating complex problems.
- Trusting communities to find their own ‘solutions’ requires a different mind-set which is challenging for those trained to ‘help’.
- High-interest debt in low-income communities is not simply the result of poor financial management skills; it has many different causes and the consequences are wide-reaching. Recognising this is the first step towards helping people gain control of their financial wellbeing.
Wellbeing Assessments

The importance of seeking and using feedback, and of being open to learning and new whakaaro [thinking], is embedded in The Wesley Way.

“Developing the Good Cents approach has also required us to create and hold space for listening, reflecting and planning. Doing this allows community voices to be heard – particularly those whose voices are seldom heard. It has also taught us that a participatory process is in itself therapeutic.”
Identifying Best Practices and Lessons Learnt

Te Hiko has created a digital library of resources to share the lessons it has learned and to offer best practices from its experiences.
“We found it hard to abandon our old mindsets, and we had to constantly remind ourselves about how much can be learned from the people we work with. That meant challenging our own assumptions and being willing to change direction.”

David Hanna
Foundations for the Future
A Wellbeing Economy in Porirua

This case study took place against the background of major changes in Porirua, including:

- Ngāti Toa Rangatira has launched a project to host citizen assemblies in Porirua.

- The government is investing in infrastructure and housing projects in Porirua, including a dedicated Pacific housing development.
A Wellbeing Economy in Porirua

For 30 years, Wesley Community Action has worked with communities in Porirua to build social capital.

Te Hiko has developed important capabilities among its team that draw on lessons learned from that experience. It wants to share these capabilities with partners who are working for a wellbeing economy in Porirua.
A Wellbeing Economy in Porirua

Te Hiko has therefore issued a call to potential partners in Porirua who support the creation of community-led economic systems.

“Te Hiko wants to be contributing to building a sense of possibility for emerging economic systems that can run parallel to the mainstream economy, that are led by communities and are more likely to build the wellbeing, resilience and sustainability of these physical locations and the people who live here.”

Watch this space!
A Wellbeing Economy in Porirua
Appendices

Appendix 1: Lessons for the Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide

Appendix 2: Thank you to everyone who helped with this case study
Appendix 1: Lessons for the Policy Design Guide

A purpose of this pilot case study was to test the *Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide*. The WEAll Global Team is bringing together learnings from this study and three other case studies in: Pomona, California; Toronto, Canada; and Letham, Scotland.

This will lead to an updated *Policy Design Guide* being published in 2023.
Appendix 1: Lessons for the Policy Design Guide

The study found the Policy Design Guide was a good framework for understanding and building on the work of Te Hiko to promote wellbeing economy policies in Porirua.

The Guide’s 5-part structure was helpful, as were the subheadings in each part.

We offer five lessons for the update of the Policy Design Guide.
Appendix 1: Lessons for the Policy Design Guide

Lesson 1

The Guide (p. 9) adopts the key principle that policy design processes to create a Wellbeing Economy need to be *contextual*.

It would be helpful to recognise explicitly that in some contexts communities are suffering from *intergenerational trauma* that policy design must address.
Lesson 2

The Guide (p. 9) adopts the key principle that policy design processes need to be *experimental*, with continuous learning.

It would be helpful to recognise explicitly that learning is a collaborative effort by *all* the partners, which can be helped using Human Learning Systems tools.
Appendix 1: Lessons for the Policy Design Guide

Lesson 3

The Guide (p. 24) offers advice on aligning institutions and stakeholders for wellbeing.

It would be helpful to present more advice on how to form intentional partnerships – including how to be a good partner – for co-creating wellbeing economy policies.
Appendix 1: Lessons for the Policy Design Guide

Lesson 4

The Guide (p. 28) offers a definition of Wellbeing Economy Policies that focuses on government interventions.

It would be helpful to expand that definition to include interventions by any institution that are purposefully designed to contribute to the achievement of wellbeing goals.
Appendix 1: Lessons for the Policy Design Guide

Lesson 5

The Guide (p. 42) emphasises the value of assessing wellbeing economy policy design.

The Guide (p. 38) recognises participatory implementation. Similarly, it would be helpful to recognise the importance of hearing community voices in assessment, since people are experts in their own lives.
Appendix 2: Thank You

This pilot case study was produced in a partnership between Te Hiko and WEAll Aotearoa New Zealand.

We thank especially Kena Duignan, Makerita Makapelu, Ruth Nonu, Dennis Makalio, Gina Wong and David Hanna (Te Hiko), and Paul Dalziel, Justin Connolly, Suzy Morrissey and Gareth Hughes (WEAll).
Appendix 2: Thank You

This research team for the project was a collaboration between the AERU at Lincoln University and Deliberate.

The AERU mission is to exercise leadership in research for sustainable wellbeing.

In 2018, AERU researchers produced a book on Wellbeing Economics: The capabilities approach to prosperity.
Appendix 2: Thank You

Deliberate is a consultancy and research business created by Justin Connolly, a founding member of WEAll Aotearoa.

Deliberate helps people take meaningful action, based on solid understandings of their wider issues using systems thinking tools.

The philosophy that underpins its work is: Discuss, Understand, Act.
Appendix 2: Thank You

The partners were introduced to each other by Richard Whatman. At the time, Richard was a Community Wealth Building Associate at Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development) with a mandate to support initiatives in Porirua.

Thanks also to Simon Duff, who worked on this project as a researcher in the AERU.
Appendix 2: Thank You

We received lots of support from the WEAll Global Team, and we particularly thank Lisa Hough-Stewart, Amanda Janoo, Ana Gómez, Kate Petriw and Michael Weatherhead.

We are very grateful to the team at ZOE (Institute for Future-Fit Economies, in Cologne) for their expertise, especially Elizabeth Dirth and Christiny Miller.
Appendix 2: Thank You

This pilot was one of four global case studies. We thank our WEAll friends in Canada, California and Scotland who offered insights and support from their work, including Yannick Beaudoin, Tara Campbell, Jeremy Fackenthal, David Green, Sarah Stocks, Kelly McInnes and Frances Rayner. We thank all the funders of these pilots, particularly our Aotearoa funder who prefers to remain anonymous.
We all need...

**FAIRNESS**
Justice in all its dimensions at the heart of economic systems, and the gap between the richest and poorest greatly reduced.

**NATURE**
A restored and safe natural world for all life.

**PARTICIPATION**
Citizens are actively engaged in their communities and locally rooted economies.

**CONNECTION**
A sense of belonging and institutions that serve the common good.

**DIGNITY**
Everyone has enough to live in comfort, safety and happiness.

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**Note:** All hyperlinks in this document were valid on its publication date. We apologise for any links that no longer operate at the time of reading.

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