

Living your best life in eastern Porirua: summary of findings

December
2023



This report summarises key findings from 9 talanoa (small group conversations) conducted with rangatahi (young people), pāhake (seniors) and whaikaha (disabled peoples) in 2023. The voices of these groups were not well represented in existing information about eastern Porirua and Te Rā Nui - Eastern Porirua Development wanted to better understand their aspirations, wants and needs for the area.

Background

In 2019, the community shared its wants, needs and aspirations for eastern Porirua with Te Rā Nui (formerly known as the Porirua Development). This information helped shape the work programme of Te Rā Nui.

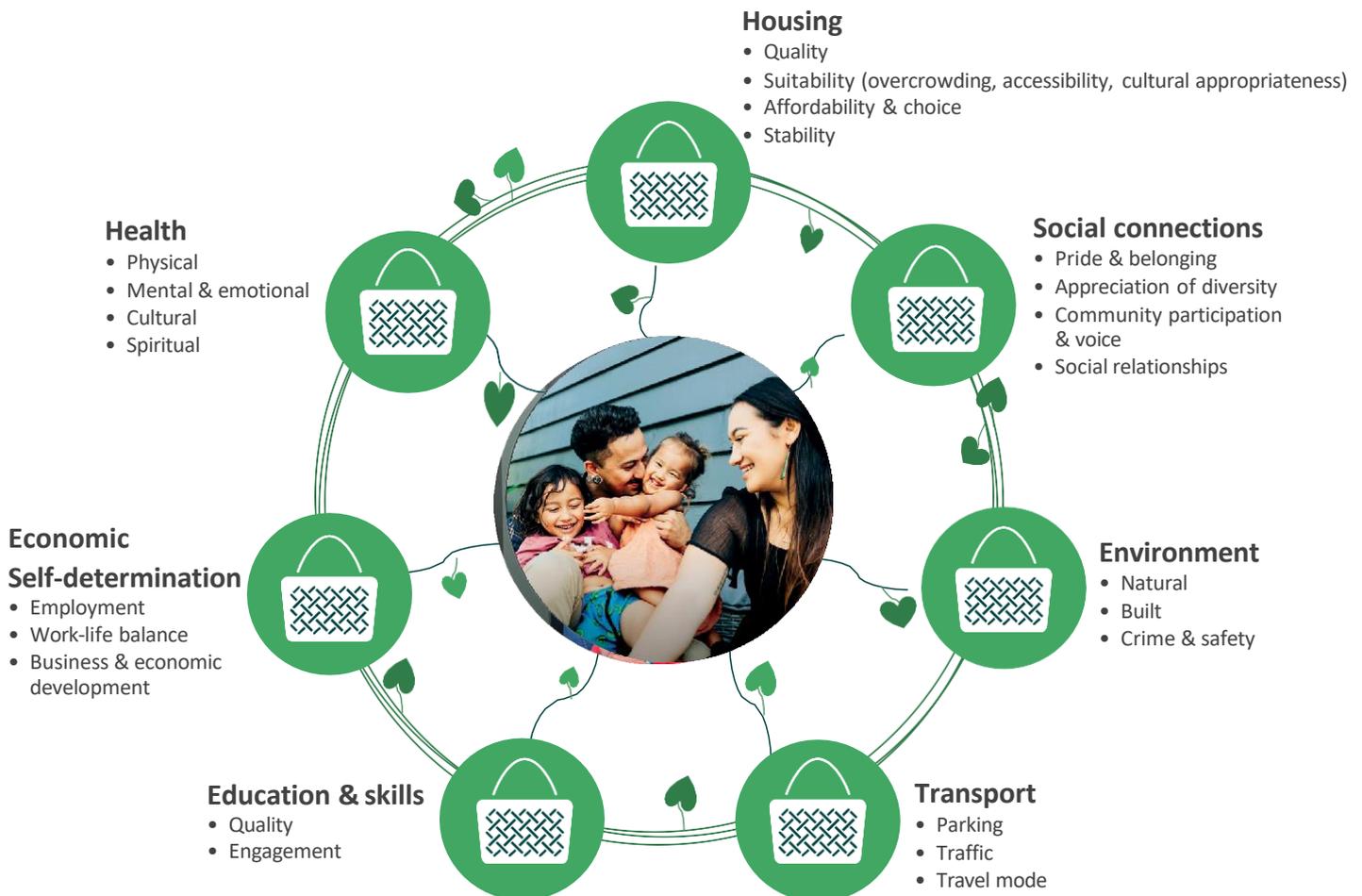
To know whether Te Rā Nui is helping to create the kind of outcomes that eastern Porirua residents want, Kāinga Ora will track community wellbeing over the next 20-25 years. It has developed an Outcomes Framework to guide the collection of this information across seven connected kete (baskets of knowledge) as shown in the diagram below.

The kumara vine shows their how each kete/area is connected and how information will be woven together to provide a full picture of wellbeing for eastern Porirua.

The nine talanoa discussed in this summary asked participants what they needed to live their best lives, covering the seven outcome areas found in the Outcomes Framework. You can read the full findings report from the talanoa [here](#).

Alongside information gathered at He Ara in 2019 and the Hui Tahī Tātou o Porirua engagement event in 2023, the talanoa findings have shaped the questions developed for the Eastern Porirua Community Survey. This will help us track how community wellbeing in eastern Porirua changes over the lifespan of the large scale project – Te Rā Nui.

Eastern Porirua Outcomes Framework



Summary of talanoa findings

Area	What's needed to live your best life	How things are now	What was said in talanoa
<p>Housing</p> 	<p>Homes that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • culturally appropriate, especially for large, intergenerational families. • accessible. • built to maximise privacy and sunlight. • Affordable. • diverse in look and feel. <p>Being able to stay in the area through life changes (e.g. ageing, income changes).</p>	<p>Most homes in eastern Porirua don't currently meet the needs identified by participants.</p> <p>Decent housing is already unaffordable for many and participants were concerned that gentrification associated with redevelopment might increase costs further, forcing some residents out of eastern Porirua.</p>	<p><i>"...most of the houses around here are only two bedrooms, three bedrooms...There's almost 10 of us living in one house and there's only like three bedrooms inside. My brother sleeps in the garage because that's the only space that's available" (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"Our tenancy manager come along, she...got the builder to take the kitchen door off, so the wheelchair could get in. And I said, 'It's not the door, it's the frame!'" (whaikaha talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"...all this development is for the people and the communities that are already living there and their relatives...we certainly don't want people to be forced out of the area" (pāhake talanoa).</i></p>



Recommendations

Te Rā Nui should continue to build a diverse range of warm, dry homes, making sure housing options are:

- accessible
- culturally appropriate
- private/not blocked by sunlight
- affordable and diverse, helping to avoid gentrification.

Summary of talanoa findings

Area	What's needed to live your best life	How things are now	What was said in talanoa
Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm, dry and accessible homes. • Homes and health services that recognise residents' cultural and spiritual needs. • Support for those who feel isolated and lonely, including rangatahi and pāhake. 	<p>Many existing homes are old, cold, damp and not accessible for disabled peoples.</p> <p>Low incomes make keeping healthy (by eating well and exercising) a challenge.</p> <p>Eastern Porirua has some excellent health services but demand for culturally-specific and youth mental health services, in particular, is stronger than service capacity.</p>	<p><i>"...so we don't own the house, and...there's a lot of times where we have to force someone to come clean up some mould and stuff...unhealthy living in that kind of environment, especially having a little sister with asthma, it's really bad for her" (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"...I can't even have a shower sometimes. I can't lift my body over [the bath]" (whaikaha talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"...you keep the body at your house [when someone passes away]. So, your house is not really made so that you can get the casket in and out the house... windows are taken out just to get the body out of the house" (whaikaha talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"...you can't be a healthy family if you don't have the money for healthy food, you know what I mean" (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"The gap when the [mental health] service is closed gives the kid the option to sit alone and when the kid is alone, everything just feels the heat" (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p>



Recommendations

Te Rā Nui should:

- continue to build warmer, dryer homes that improve physical and mental health
- ensure house designs support cultural and spiritual health.
- work with health services to ensure that rangatahi, pāhake and whaikaha are supported as redevelopment changes the community.

Summary of talanoa findings

Area	What's needed to live your best life	How things are now	What was said in talanoa
Economic self-determination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local work opportunities within eastern Porirua. Support for rangatahi and others searching for employment. Food security, including affordable access to healthy foods. 	<p>Too many eastern Porirua residents are struggling to reach financial stability and are limited by racial stereotypes about what work is 'suitable' for them.</p> <p>Employment is often outside of eastern Porirua bringing extra financial costs, commuting times and carbon emissions.</p>	<p><i>"[Make] sure the jobs are stable and in our community" (whaikaha talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"I think just having jobs that would cater to things that are outside of what's expected of what Islanders go into in terms of work...supermarkets, trades, all that stuff, that's just what we're expected to do...So I guess just having opportunities that we can do what we aspire to be" (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"...there's less in Porirua than there is in Wellington. For example, housing in Wellington is harder to get, but there's more job opportunities out there for them. Whereas in Porirua, there's more housing here, but less job opportunities" (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p>



Recommendations

Te Rā Nui should:

- continue its cadetship and apprenticeship programmes providing work opportunities for eastern Porirua residents and its support for Le Fale jobs and skills hub in Cannon's Creek.
- enable opportunities for community or private gardens to help improve food security.

Summary of talanoa findings

Area	What's needed to live your best life	How things are now	What was said in talanoa
Education & skills 	Education and skills training that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflects collective values such as tautua (service) and solesolevaki (reciprocity). support all young people to their best potential, no matter what their ethnicity or ability. 	Rangatahi generally described positive learning environments in schools, but they did not always feel understood or supported by teachers. Other participants were concerned that relocations are disrupting student connections with schools.	<p><i>“...if I had gone to a different school other than Porirua College...I wouldn't feel safe, I wouldn't feel as comfortable that whole time to complete my studies...Porirua College showed me what's good, what it is to actually live the life and see the struggles in person. It makes me feel more empowered to strive for more in the future, to push for more, for the community” (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>“So, when you move a school or you move the whānau away from a school, like when we were supposed to decant the population down in Cannon's Creek and put it in a house around about six months away from your school, what is that going to do for the ability of that child to reconnect with other people they've never met?” (pāhake talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>“...education needs to have things like fundamental life skills... responsibility, a responsibility to each other not just to self. I mean those things are really important” (pāhake talanoa).</i></p>



Recommendations

Te Rā Nui cannot directly influence educational outcomes, but it can:

- work with Kahui Ako and the Ministry of Education to monitor significant changes in school rolls as the local population grows to avoid educational disruption.

Summary of talanoa findings

Area	What's needed to live your best life	How things are now	What was said in talanoa
Social connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong sense of local identity and belonging. • Intergenerational living. • Events and activities bringing the community together. • The collective values of tautua (service), solesolevaki (reciprocity), whanaungatanga (connections between people) and manaakitanga (hospitality and care to uplift others). 	<p>There's great pride in eastern Porirua and the collective values reflected in the community.</p> <p>However, racism, shrinking networks as residents age and design features like large fences harm social relationships.</p> <p>There's also concern that population changes might change community identity and kotahitanga (unity), especially if local voices are not heard by decisionmakers.</p>	<p><i>"...once we move in, we're in there for a lifetime...we're there for keeps" (whaikaha talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"Porirua is like a family home-base kind of place. Like, people help one another, even if they don't know you, they always make you feel at home..." (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"I've housed eighteen people at one time in my house [which has three bedrooms]...We had four cabins on our property and we made it work. [It was important to do this]...because nobody was hospitable to me when I was growing up" (whaikaha talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>"I think when you're looking at developing an area...[a community hub] needs to be a very important part of it. A place where you can go...a community base somewhere where people can be comfortable to congregate" (pāhake talanoa).</i></p>



Recommendations

Te Rā Nui should:

- continue supporting community events
- consider working with Porirua City Council and community groups to develop a community hub that brings residents together as redevelopment progresses
- work to protect the strong social connections and identities that are important to residents.

Summary of talanoa findings

Area	What's needed to live your best life	How things are now	What was said in talanoa
Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community awareness of climate change. • Climate resilience. • Shared green spaces where people can exercise and make social connections. • Accessible parks with inclusive amenities (such as public toilets and benches to rest on). • Safety in public and private spaces. 	<p>Gardening is a key way of connecting with te taiao (the environment).</p> <p>Many participants do not currently use parks and green spaces due to safety or accessibility concerns, although they wanted to use them to connect to te taiao.</p>	<p><i>“And we make our vegetables and that in your gardens as well, so it’s a better way than just buying it from the shops...” (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>“...there should be more park benches – seating – around, people with disability can sit and stand up and walk with walker. I think there needs to be more seats, you see them with their shopping and all that sort of thing...” (pāhake talanoa)</i></p> <p><i>“...children need to know that there is green patches. They need to know that they’re just around, you know, within walking distance that they can go and look at trees, and work out that there are different sorts of trees. They can have a look at what’s creeping around in the ground underneath. This is an exploration, so that for adults it’s a place they can go and just have a good breath of fresh air” (pāhake talanoa).</i></p>



Recommendations

Te Rā Nui should continue to:

- ensure better access to and safety in green spaces and parks
- continue addressing climate resilience through wetland and water reservoir projects
- enable residents to act as kaitiaki (guardians) of the local environment.

Summary of talanoa findings

Area	What's needed to live your best life	How things are now	What was said in talanoa
Transport 	Reliable and convenient transport to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> connect with whānau and friends. get to work, health services, shops and other amenities. 	There is recognition that climate action requires decreased reliance on cars (and, as a result, on parking to). However, cars are still essential until public transport in eastern Porirua is more frequent, reliable and accessible, particularly for those travelling outside of standard hours and for family members travelling to different destinations.	<p><i>“In the future we’re going to sort of reduce emissions and things like that so public transport is a key” (pāhake talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>“...public transport is not running as well so it’s not really that easy to stop driving. I get like how come yeah it’s good for the environment but at the same time people have to be able to afford to go places, drive their family... it might be possible to have [public transport] at night as well, because some people do night shifts” (rangatahi talanoa).</i></p> <p><i>“...someone in a wheelchair, especially the ones that have castor wheels at the front... you could go past thirty or forty driveways before you actually find a lip onto a driveway that will actually let the wheelchair go up” (whaikaha talanoa).</i></p>



Recommendations

Until public transport, cycle paths and other car alternatives are accessible to all, Te Rā Nui should:

- continue to work with Waka Kōtahi on the Transport Plan to improve transport routes and connections
- be careful not to disadvantage residents through reduced parking.

Next steps

The talanoa findings will be used to:

- inform Te Rā Nui staff and work programmes
- shape the questions and content of the Eastern Porirua Community Survey (first survey scheduled for February 2024)
- inform the Baseline Outcomes Report published by Kāinga Ora in 2024. This will show what eastern Porirua is like now, so Kāinga Ora can monitor changes in community wellbeing outcomes over the next 20 - 25 years.



Interested in knowing more?

Read the longer version of this report found [here](#)

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