

Executive Summary

The Hearts and Minds of Katikati research project was conceived by the Katikati Taiao and supported with funding from the Lotteries commission.

The Hearts and Minds research aims to provide an understanding of the social connections in Katikati, that is, how the various communities in Katikati live and work together.

The reason why the Hearts and Minds research sought this understanding was the desire by Katikati Taiao to see strengthened social connections in Katikati so that all communities within Katikati could thrive.

The Hearts and Minds research was not a counting exercise in the traditional sense of gathering statistics on the people living in Katikati (although some statistics are reported). Rather, Hearts and Minds went deep into some communities by participating in events and facilitating some events within communities. The outcome of such participation and facilitation as a research process has provided a keen insight into how communities in Katikati work, their strengths, their values, and their aspirations as communities within Katikati.

The Hearts and Minds research also modelled processes to strengthen social connections. This was done by drawing people from diverse backgrounds in Katikati to form a 'reference group'. This group met regularly over the course of the research and learned to trust and understand one another. Consequently, new social connections were made, particularly with Tangata Whenua, and a capacity to collaborate and act together on shared visions was developed.

The Hearts and Minds research identifies five themes of shared visions across the communities in Katikati:

- Mana Whenua – wider community connection with the culture and traditions of iwi who hold connection to the land around Katikati
- Youth Wellbeing – wider community connection to youth, both while at primary and secondary schools and their pathways beyond school
- Intercultural Connections – wider community connections between the diverse cultures living, working and passing through the community
- Connection to Taiao, the natural environment – wider community connection to improving and protecting the natural environment
- Service to the Community – wider community connections between those groups and volunteers who provide service to our communities

The Hearts and Minds research does not propose specific recommendations. Rather, it offers an invitation to members of all communities in Katikati to propose and engage in projects and programmes that support the shared visions identified during the research. Some tentative 'calls for action' are proposed, there may be more, but such actions need to be community-led, that is by individuals and groups in the community who see possibilities for how things could be better in their world and are willing to act. Some actions are already occurring. For instance, there is a project underway led by David Marshall with the support of the Community Centre, looking into how the community can better connect with 'disconnected youth'.

There are many organisations in Katikati, such as the Community Centre, Katch Katikati, Service and Faith groups, Katikati Taiao and Uretara Estuary Managers who have the capacity to support and facilitate community-led developments.

Katikati Taiao in particular wishes to strengthen community connections beginning with the shared community visions identified in the Hearts and Minds research. It sees its role as harnessing loose community connections and helping to grow a capacity for those connections to act. A first action by the Katikati Taiao is to invite individuals and groups within all the communities in Katikati to form a Community Action Team whose purpose would be to connect across communities, come up with ideas, and so develop a capacity to act, organise and collaborate.