

Foreword



Justin Lester
Mayor of Wellington

Around the world, cities like ours are becoming the economic, social and cultural backbone of our countries. This represents an opportunity to lead the way like never before - but it also comes with challenges.

Here in New Zealand's capital we've had our fair share, and we know that our future holds more.

Some - like earthquakes and sea level rise - have a measure of predictability. While we don't know when they might happen, we do know what the effects will look and feel like. We've seen them before, often very close to home. For example, I believe we owe it to the people of Christchurch to take what we can from what their city has been through over the last 6 years.

But along with the more predictable challenges, there are shocks and stresses we don't yet know about.

What we do know is that resilient communities will pull together in times of adversity, while also having better lives each and every day.

We also know there are things we can do today that will pay back exponentially when the time comes. Some things are simple, like getting to know your neighbours, but others are more complex, like investing in housing and transport frameworks to make them efficient and robust. By preparing now, we're making sure we can rise to meet the challenges in the future.

This strategy lays out a coherent blueprint for dealing with future shocks and stresses. Some of the plans we have are short term and tactical; others are longer term and more strategic in nature. All of them have people at the centre.

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.¹

In recent years climate experts, disaster responders and sustainability proponents have come into rare alignment. They agree we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop and invest in a future for Wellington that ensures we will not only survive shocks and stresses, but also thrive afterwards.

On behalf of Wellingtonians, present and especially future, I would like to thank 100 Resilient Cities - Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation, for their support, and I would like to thank the many people who contributed to the development of this document.

I'm privileged to be able to launch Wellington's inaugural Resilience Strategy.

Tū whare ora.

¹ What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people



Michael Berkowitz
President
100 Resilient Cities

Kia ora,

On behalf of the entire 100 Resilient Cities family, I want to congratulate Mayor Lester and the city of Wellington on the release of your Resilience Strategy. This is a major milestone for the city and 100RC's partnership with "the world's coolest little capital".

Wellingtonians have had a long history of resilient determination, whether as warriors, or pioneers, creating strong communities in this beautiful but sometimes harsh harbour at the southern tip of the North Island. Potentially destructive earthquakes, rising seas, and the city's famous winds have kept Wellingtonians acutely aware of their vulnerability and helped hone their famous Kiwi ingenuity.

With the strategy, Wellington continues the serious work of ensuring that the city becomes resilient not only to the shocks of earthquakes but also the daily stresses that can be equally destructive, such as social and economic inequality, the physical integrity of the city's houses, and issues of mental health and addiction that plague too many.

Wellington is changing; its population is growing and becoming more diverse. It is also getting older, and as the city welcomes newcomers who will enrich the city and ensure its vibrant future, this strategy provides for programmes for their employment and integration. As Wellington evolves, it must foster collaboration between its communities, provide access to information and services to all, and ensure meaningful involvement in decision making. This strategy emphasises that trust and collaboration are key - without them, true resilience that takes into account all of Wellington's voices and concerns cannot be achieved. The ancient Māori legend of Ngake and Whātaitai beautifully illustrates the kind of inclusivity and resourcefulness that will support Wellington's resilience journey in the coming years and beyond.

Late last year the Kaikoura earthquake drove home the urgency of building this kind of resilience. It also highlighted a major reason why Wellington will undoubtedly be able to do so: Chief Resilience Officer Mike Mendonça. Mike's work on the recovery after the earthquake shows he and his team have already begun the work of embedding resilience thinking into how the city manages its shocks and stresses. Rather than trying to defy nature, the Wellington Resilience Strategy seeks to live in tandem with it, using the challenges it poses as opportunities to become even stronger.

This document is just the beginning, of course. As the capital city of a progressive nation, we're looking to you to lead the way nationally and internationally; you've already begun to lead by example, and we've come to expect nothing less.



Mike Mendonça was appointed Wellington's Chief Resilience Officer in December 2015 to lead development of this strategy. He now also manages the recovery efforts in Wellington following the Kaikoura earthquake and will oversee the implementation of this strategy.

