

Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index 2001-2010: Cultural Well-being

June 2011

Greater Wellington and all the territorial authorities in the region are partners in the development of the Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (GPI).



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1. Introduction

For more information on the background and methodology of the WR-GPI please refer to the paper “The approach to the Wellington region genuine progress index (WR-GPI) 2001-2010” which can be downloaded from: www.gpiwellingtonregion.govt.nz

Background

For well over half a century the well-being of nations has been inferred by measuring Gross Domestic (or National) Product (GDP) – the total amount of cash flowing in an economy. GDP and other related market statistics are economic measures that measure the market value of goods and services produced within a country in a given period. They are not indicators of social progress and were never intended to be used as measures of well-being.

Internationally there is now considerable interest in developing wider measures of progress and well-being that do not rely solely on GDP (Talberth, J., et al., 2007; Neumayer, 2000; Colman, 2004; Anielski, 2001; Michalos, A., et al., 2010). These measures are not intended to replace GDP, but challenge the use of GDP as a measure of progress and well-being. One of the emerging new measures from the fields of green economics is the Genuine Progress Index (GPI). The GPI is an accounting system that attempts to measure whether a nation’s or community’s growth, increased production of goods, and expanding services have actually resulted in the improvement of the well-being of the people in that nation or community.

The decision to develop a Genuine Progress Index for the Wellington region (WR-GPI) was made as part of the development of the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS). The WRS is a growth strategy that has been developed by the Wellington region’s nine local authorities,¹ in conjunction with central government and the region’s business, education, research and voluntary sector interests.

During the development of the WRS, the public said that prosperity in the Wellington region meant more than monetary wealth. They said it was about quality of life for all members of society and that economic growth should not be sought at the expense of the community or the environment.

As a result it was decided to use a GPI framework that measures our progress across all areas of life. The GPI has been developed to measure the economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects of well-being of the region. The framework is based on the nine WRS community outcomes, which are identified in the WRS as the well-being goals of the region.

Methodology

The goal is for the WR-GPI to be a set of accounts that are based on an indicator framework that measures progress across all areas of life. To achieve this goal the development of the WR-GPI comprises two parts:

¹ The nine local authorities in the Wellington region include Greater Wellington Regional Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, Porirua City Council, Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Carterton District Council, Masterton District Council and South Wairarapa District Council.

- an indicator framework that assesses progress and trends over time, and
- a set of accounts that assess the economic value of non-market social, cultural and environmental assets that relate to the data and evidence provided by the indicator framework.

The majority of work to date on the WR-GPI has focused on the development of an indicator framework. The WR-GPI 2001-2010 framework is shown in Figure 1. The methodology used to develop the WR-GPI 2001-2010 indicator framework is described in this section.

Indicators provide specific information on the state or condition of something, with the purpose of measuring change or trends over time. Good indicators provide essential information about the health and functioning of a system and can tell us whether progress is being made. However, not all indicators are ideal for use in a monitoring framework. For the WR-GPI a set of criteria was developed to determine the value or usefulness of potential indicators of well-being. The criteria included such things as whether the data came from a reliable or official source, whether it clearly showed change over time and whether it was easily understood.

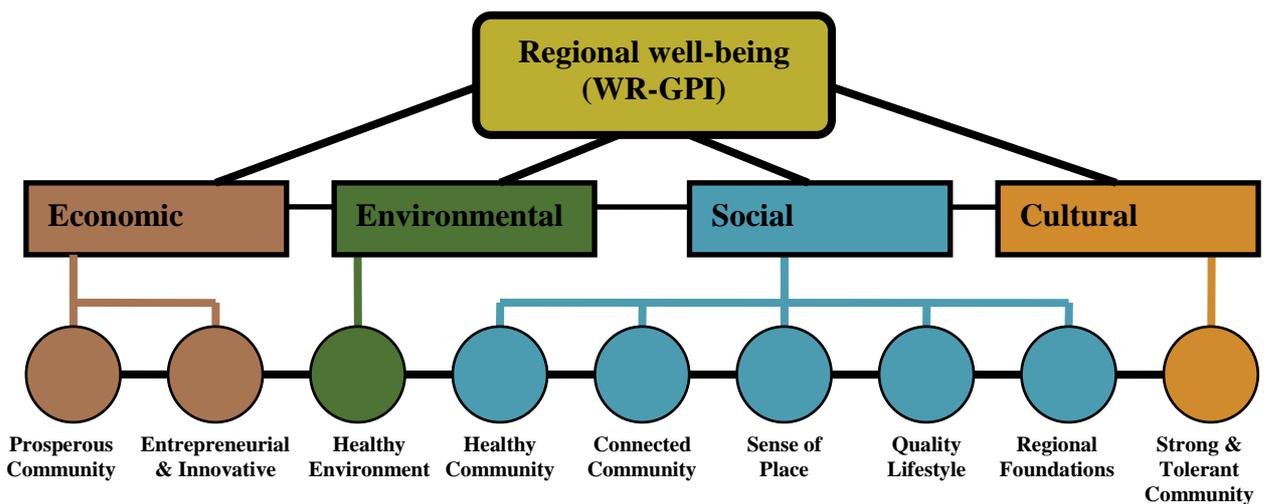


Figure 1. WR-GPI framework

A paper entitled “*The approach to the Wellington region genuine progress index (WR-GPI) 2001-2010*” (Durling, 2011) provides a comprehensive description of the indicators and methodologies employed to construct the WR-GPI 2001-2010 framework, and readers are directed to this for further information.

Indicator and GPI trends

There are two types of trends presented in this report:

- Individual indicator trends, and
- GPI trends for sets of indicators.²

Throughout this report symbols are used to represent the trends in indicator and GPI results.

Individual indicator trends

The trend for each indicator shows an improvement, no clear progress, or a decline in well-being. The well-being trend may also be uncertain due to no or insufficient trend data available. The relevant well-being trend is represented by one of the symbols shown in Table 1. For example, an upward arrow shows that the change in indicator data over the study period results in an improvement in well-being. It is possible that the indicator data may show a negative trend over the study period but will still be represented by an upward arrow as the indicator itself may have a negative influence on well-being, for example unemployment rates, road injuries, and crime rates.

Table 1. Indicator trend symbols

Symbol	Explanation
	The indicator data trend indicates an improvement in well-being
	The indicator data trend indicates no clear well-being progress
	The indicator data trend indicates a decline in well-being
	Uncertain, no or insufficient trend data available to assess well-being progress

GPI trends for sets of indicators

The trend for each GPI over the study period indicate improving conditions of well-being, no significant change in well-being, or declining well-being conditions, and are identified by one of the symbols shown in Table 2. A cross, for example, shows that there has been a negative change over the study period in relation to the relevant well-being goals.

² Indicators have been grouped under the nine community outcomes and the four aspects of well-being.

Table 2. GPI trend symbols

Symbol	Explanation
	The GPI trend indicates an improving condition over the study period
	The GPI trend indicates no significant trend or insufficient information to assess conditions
	The GPI trend indicates a declining condition over the study period

2. Cultural well-being and strong and tolerant community GPI



The cultural well-being and strong and tolerant community GPI showed little change over the 2001 to 2010 period.

Overview

Under the Local Government Act (2002), one of the purposes of local government is to promote the social, environmental, economic, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future. The Act does not define cultural well-being but allows for councils to develop their own definitions relevant to the local context. The Act also emphasises the need for strategic planning, democratic decision-making, and a sustainable development approach that meets all four aspects of well-being, noting that sustainable development will only be achieved if a council deals with all four aspects of well-being.

There are numerous interactions amongst the elements of the WR-GPI framework, including the four aspects of well-being, as shown in Figure 1. For ease of presentation of results and to keep reports to a manageable size for the reader, the findings for the WR-GPI 2001-2010 are presented as separate reports for each aspect of well-being.

The concept of well-being is widely used, but often without being clearly defined (King, 2007). The evidence from large national and cross-national studies shows that individuals with higher levels of well-being as indicated by such measures as life satisfaction or happiness, tend to be more productive, have higher incomes, more stable marriages and better health and life expectancy (Diener, 2000; Judge et al., 2001).

While there is no regional definition of cultural well-being, it can be considered that cultural well-being is the vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through:

- Participation in civics, arts and cultural activities
- Recognising and valuing our history, heritage, culture and diversity.

Under the WRS community outcomes the area of cultural well-being is represented by only one community outcome called strong and tolerant community. This means that the GPI for cultural well-being is the same as the strong and tolerant community GPI.

Strong and tolerant community includes 12 indicators that were selected to measure progress towards the strong and tolerant community outcome definition (shown below).

OUTCOME DEFINITION:

People are important. All members of our community are empowered to participate in decision-making and to contribute to society. We celebrate diversity and welcome newcomers, while recognising the special role of tangata whenua.

The definition of this community outcome connects to the principles of cultural well-being through its focus on participating and contributing to society, and recognising the diversity of the population.

The outcome definition emphasises the understanding that a strong and tolerant community is about participating and contributing to society, in ways that are inclusive and respectful of the needs and aspirations of diverse communities. Section 3 of this report shows the raw data available over the 2001 to 2010 study period for each of the strong and tolerant community indicators. For some indicators data is not available for the whole 2001 to 2010 study period. For details on our approach for dealing with this, see the approach paper referred to earlier (Durling, 2011).

To avoid repeating the same information, the findings shown below for cultural well-being are also the same as the strong and tolerant community outcome GPI.

Findings

As shown in Figure 1 the WR-GPI 2001-2010 framework is made up of four well-being aspects: Economic, Environmental, Social and Cultural. This report focuses on findings related to the cultural well-being aspect of the WR-GPI.

In total 12 of the 86 indicators in the WR-GPI 2001-2010 framework form part of the cultural well-being (strong and tolerant community) aspect of the framework. Section 3 of this report shows the raw data available over the 2001 to 2010 study period for each of these 12 indicators. Using the available data, individual index values for each indicator have been calculated for each year over the 2001 to 2010 study period. Figure 2 shows the average of these individual index values, and represents the cultural well-being (and strong and tolerant community) GPI for the Wellington region from 2001-2010.

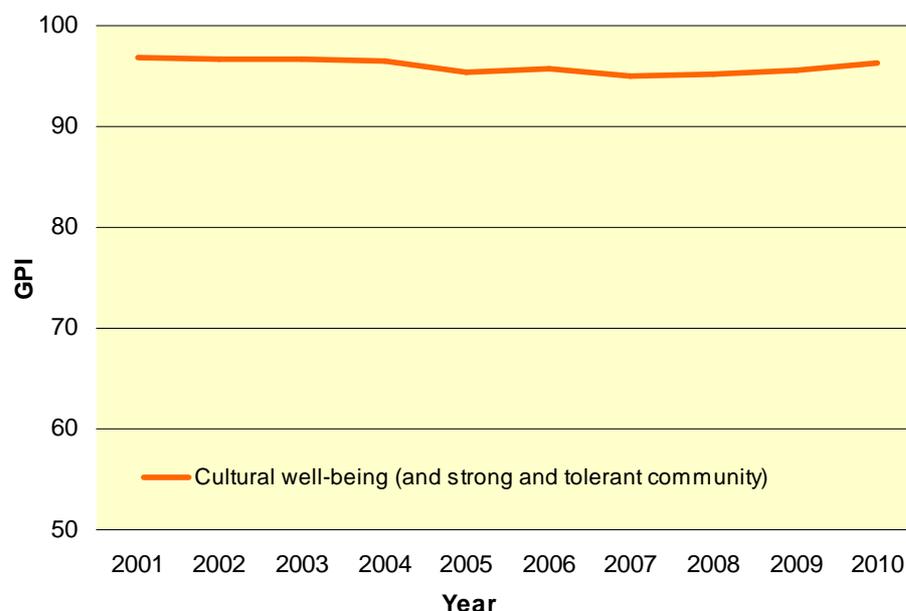


Figure 2. Cultural well-being (and strong and tolerant community) GPI, 2001-2010

Over the 2001 to 2010 time period, the cultural well-being GPI was found to be highest in 2001 and lowest in 2007. Overall, the cultural well-being GPI gradually decreased from 2001 to 2005, remained relatively unchanged between 2005 and 2009, but has increased over the last year. However, these changes have resulted in little change overall in the cultural well-being GPI over the study period.

The decline in cultural well-being (and strong and tolerant community) observed between 2001 and 2005 was due to decreases in three indicators over this period. The biggest contributor to the decline in GPI is the decrease in average voter turnout. This was followed by the percentage of children enrolled in Māori language education and the percentage of the population that can have an everyday conversation in te reo Māori. Over this time there were increases in two indicators – the percentage of the population identifying with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups, and registered heritage places. However, the observed increases were not great enough to counteract the decreases observed across the other three indicators, resulting in a slight decrease in overall cultural well-being (and strong and tolerant community).

As stated above, the cultural well-being (and strong and tolerant community) GPI was relatively unchanged from 2005 to 2009, however over this time there were slight changes in individual indicator index values, but in this case negative changes to the indicators were counter-balanced by the positive changes to other indicators. In particular there were further decreases in the percentage of children enrolled in Māori language education, but increases were recorded in the number of registered heritage places, overall positive perception of cultural diversity and the perception that the public understands council decision making.

Overall, from 2001 to 2010 there have been decreases in voter participation, the percentage of children enrolled in Māori language education and a decrease in the percentage of the population that can have an everyday conversation in the Māori language. However, from 2001 to 2010 it has been encouraging to see increases in the number of registered heritage places, overall positive perception of cultural diversity and the perception that the public understands council decision making and the ethnic diversity.

Discussion

Over the study period there were improvements to four indicators, declines to three indicators, no change to four indicators, and for one indicator it is not possible to identify a trend as only one year of data is currently available.

Whilst little progress has been made in the cultural well-being (or strong and tolerant community) over the study period, as a region our performance in cultural well-being is still relatively high. Overall, people living in the Wellington region have a high level of support available from family and friends during difficult times. This suggests that supporting and maintaining contact with family and friends is important to us. According to the Ministry of Social Development (Ministry of Social Development, 2008) having support networks in place that can be called upon for help during hard times is integral to social cohesion and contributing to a person's well-being.

More recently the social report (Ministry of Social Development, 2010) stated that:

“Social connectedness refers to the relationships people have with others and the benefits these relationships can bring to the individual as well as to society. These relationships and connections can be a source of enjoyment and support. People who feel socially connected also contribute towards building communities and society. They help to create what is sometimes called “social capital,” the networks that help society to function effectively.”

The social report (Ministry of Social Development, 2010) also states:

“Cultural identity is an important contributor to people’s well-being. Identifying with a particular culture helps people feel they belong and gives them a sense of security. An established cultural identity has also been linked with positive outcomes in areas such as health and education.”

The Wellington region is home to people from diverse cultures and lifestyles, and is becoming increasingly diverse. Cultural diversity can make the community and the life we live much richer, with cultural activities contributing to social connectedness. As a region we are generally positive about cultural diversity, we recognise the special role of tangata whenua, and value a population rich in heritage, cultures and languages provides enormous social, cultural and economic benefits. We also believe that the region has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene, and support this by having high attendance at arts events. The arts make a strong contribution to community strength and identity, and are recognised for facilitating communication across social, economic, cultural and ethnic groups.

People’s sense of connection with wider society is also reflected in participation in the political process. Voting is a way that people can participate in decision-making, to be fairly represented and to seek redress for discrimination. However, information regarding our progress in this area is mixed. While there has been a decline in voter turnout, there appears to be a strong perception among Wellington residents that they can influence council decision making, and their understanding of the council decision making process has increased.

3. Strong and tolerant community indicators

OUTCOME DEFINITION:

People are important. All members of our community are empowered to participate in decision-making and to contribute to society. We celebrate diversity and welcome newcomers, while recognising the special role of tangata whenua

Strong and tolerant community indicators have been selected to measure progress towards the strong and tolerant community outcome definition goals for the region. The outcome definition emphasises the understanding that a strong and tolerant community is about participating and contributing to society, in ways that are inclusive and respectful of the needs and aspirations of diverse communities.

In total 12 indicators are included in the WR-GPI 2001-2010 framework that form part of the strong and tolerant community outcome area. Each indicator is assigned a symbol to represent how the data trend relates to well-being progress (refer to the symbol key in Table 1, section 1).

For a full list of strong and tolerant community indicators, including the indicator definition, its influence on well-being and the data sources refer to Appendix 2 in the paper titled “*The approach to the Wellington region genuine progress index (WR-GPI) 2001-2010*” (Durling, 2011).

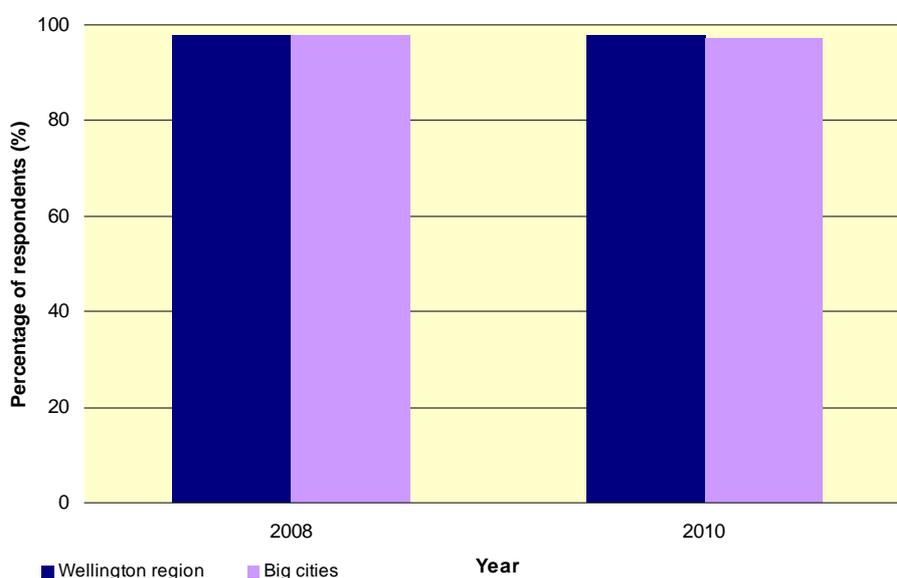
3.1. Residents perceptions of availability of support



Resident's perception of availability of support is unchanged from 2008 to 2010

This indicator measures if people have someone to turn to for help and support during difficult times. If people have support they feel more safe and secure. This indicator portrays a sense of social cohesion in society and the contribution this social cohesion makes to a person's well-being.

Resident's perception of availability of support, 2001-2010



Source: Quality of Life Survey

Findings

- In 2010, 97.9% of respondents in the Wellington region adult population had someone to turn to for support in a time of need.
- This is similar to the percentage for the population of the participating eight big cities.
- There has been little change in resident's perception of availability of support from 2008 to 2010.

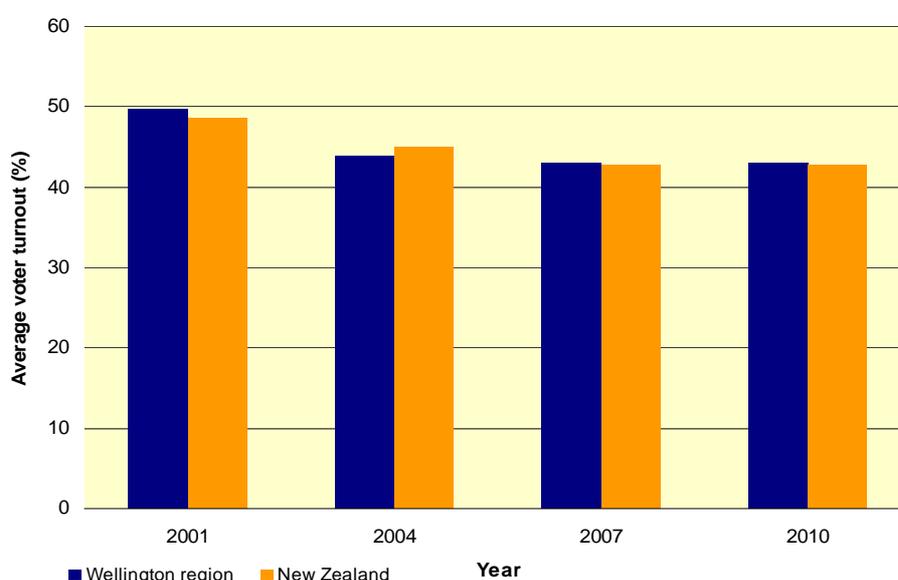
3.2. Average voter turnout in local council, DHB and regional council elections



Average voter turnout has gradually decreased since 2001

Voting is a fundamental way that people can express their political will. Energetic citizen participation in the political process and in civic affairs is a sign of a healthy democracy and also reflects people's sense of connection with the wider society.

Average voter turnout in local council, DHB and regional council elections, 2001-2010



Source: Department of Internal Affairs-Local Authority Election Statistics

Findings

- Data relating to the 2010 local council, district health board and regional council elections was not available at the time of writing (so is assumed to be the same as 2007).
- In 2007, an average of 43% Wellington region electors voted at local council, DHB and regional council elections.
- In 2007, average voter turnout across the three elections was slightly higher in Wellington than New Zealand.
- From 2001 to 2007, the average voter turnout across the three elections has gradually decreased in the Wellington region and across the whole of New Zealand.

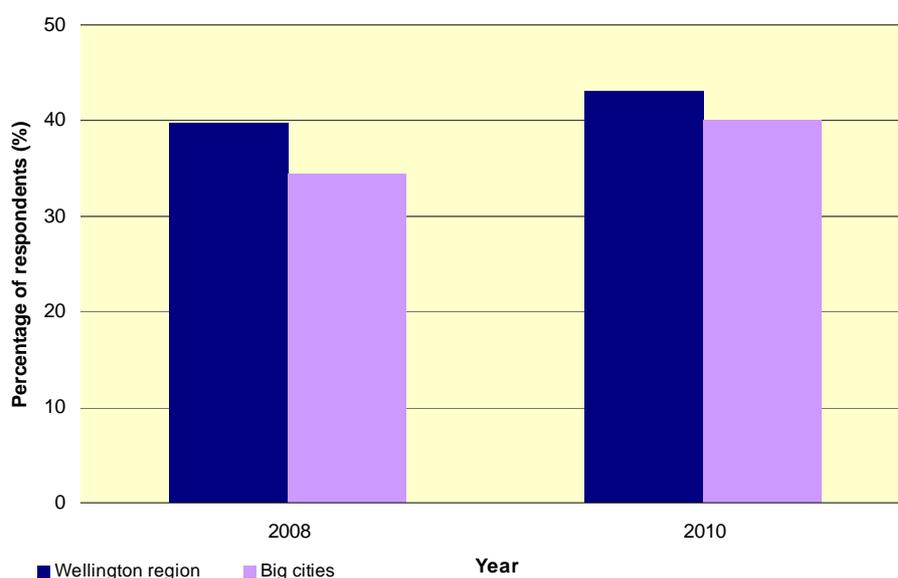
3.3. Perception that the public understands council decision making



The proportion of the population perceiving that the public understands council decision making increased between 2008 and 2010

Understanding of council processes plays an important part in the level of community involvement in decision-making. Trust and understanding of the decision making process is an important factor in obtaining participation and effective input from residents.

Perception that the public understands council decision making, 2001-2010



Source: Quality of Life Survey

Findings

- In 2010, 43.1 % of respondents in the Wellington region adult population thought they understood how their council makes decisions.
- The percentage of the Wellington region that thought they understood how their council makes decisions has increased from 2008 to 2010 (39.8% to 43.1%)
- In 2008 and 2010 slightly higher percentages of the Wellington region adult population thought they understood how their council makes decisions, compared to the population of the participating eight big cities.

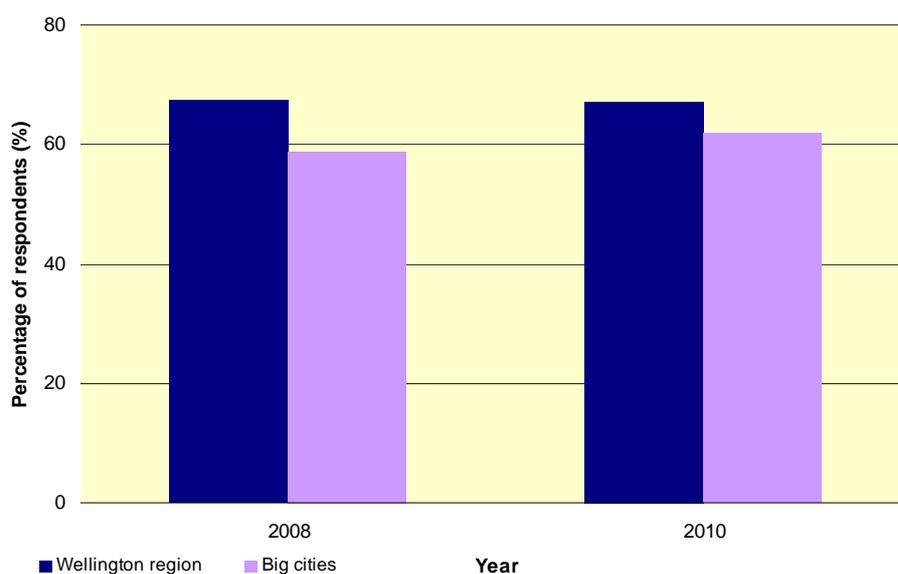
3.4. Perception that the public can influence council decision making



The proportion of the population that thought the public could influence council decision-making was unchanged from 2008 to 2010

This indicator measures whether a healthy democratic process is at work. It is important that people feel they are being listened to and that diverse groups feel valued and respected by the community, as this may create a sense of belonging and pride in their community.

Perception that the public can influence council decision making, 2001-2010



Source: Quality of Life Survey

Findings

- In 2010, 67.2% of respondents in the Wellington region adult population thought the public had an influence on council decision making.
- The percentage of the Wellington region that thought the public could influence council decision-making was unchanged from 2008 to 2010, whereas a slight increase was observed for the eight big cities (58.9% to 61.9%)
- However, in 2008 and 2010 slightly higher percentages of the Wellington region adult population thought the public could influence council decision-making, compared to the population of the participating eight big cities.

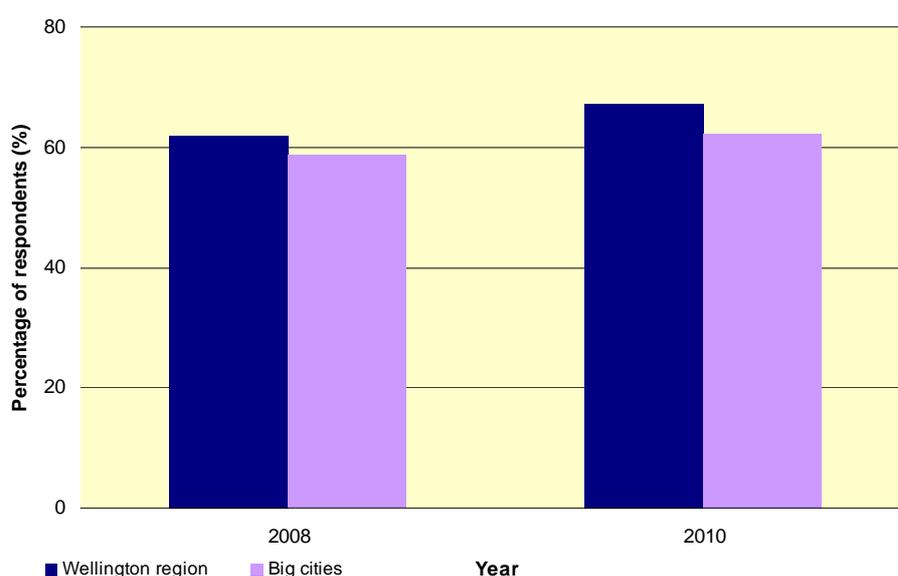
3.5. Overall positive perception of cultural diversity



Resident's perception of cultural diversity increased between 2008 and 2010

Cultural diversity can make the community and the life we live much richer, with cultural activities contributing to social connectedness. A population rich in cultures and languages provides enormous social, cultural and economic benefit.

Overall positive perception of cultural diversity, 2001-2010



Source: Quality of Life Survey

Findings

- In 2010, 67.3% of respondents in the Wellington region adult population thought that an increasing number of people with different lifestyles and cultures makes their local area a better place to live.
- The proportion of the Wellington region adult population who thought that an increasing number of people with different lifestyles and cultures makes their local area a better place to live, increased from 61.9% in 2008 to 67.3% in 2010.
- In both 2008 and 2010, adults in the Wellington region were more likely to think that cultural diversity makes their area a better place to live compared to adults in the participating eight big cities.

3.6. Percentage of people who can speak Te Reo Māori

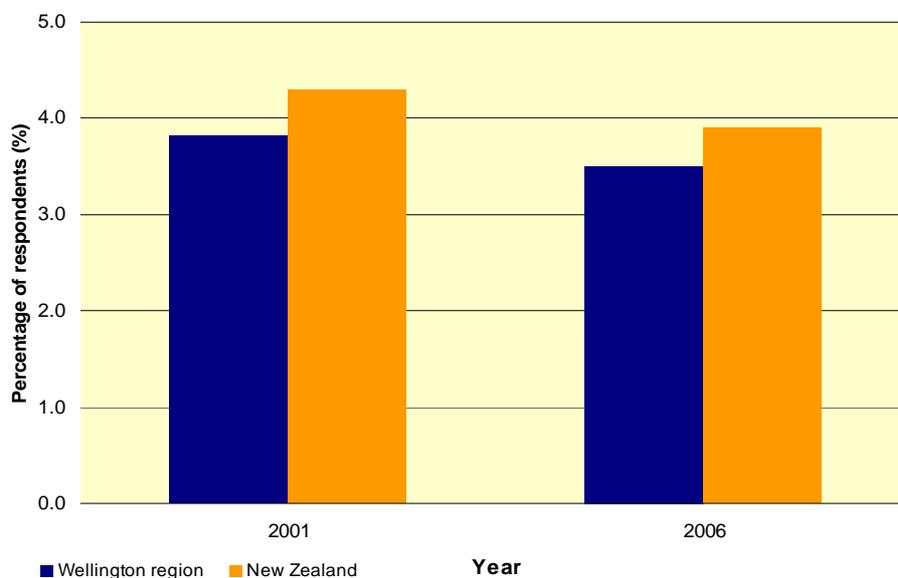


The proportion of the population able to hold an everyday conversation in the Māori language decreased slightly between 2001 and 2006

Te Reo Māori was made an official language of New Zealand under the Māori Language Act in 1987 and is one of New Zealand's three official languages. The Māori Language Commission states that:

“the Māori language is a taonga that gives our country its distinct and unique cultural identity. For Māori to thrive as a language of everyday use, we must encourage its use in our homes and communities as much as possible.”

Percentage of the population that can speak Te Reo Māori, 2001-2010



Source: Statistics New Zealand Census

Findings

- In 2006, 3.5% of respondents in the Wellington region population could hold an everyday conversation in the Māori language.
- Over the last two census periods (2001 to 2006) there has been a slight decline in the percentage of the Wellington region population and the New Zealand population, that can speak Te Reo Māori.
- In both 2001 and 2006, the percentage of the population in the Wellington region that can speak Te Reo Māori was lower than the New Zealand average.

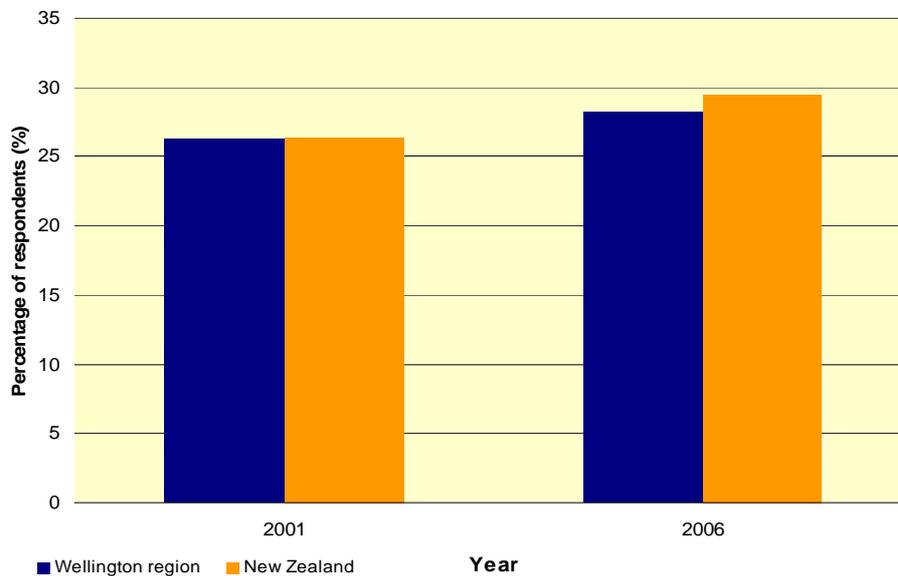
3.7. Percentage of population identifying with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups



The proportion of the population identifying with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups increased between 2001 and 2006

Ethnic composition is a key measure of demographic change over time. The combination of cultures, languages, traditions and skills brings vibrancy to the region, which is reflected in cultural events and traditions. A good understanding of the ethnic composition can also help the region deliver services and plan for the future.

Percentage of the population identifying with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups, 2001-2010



Source: Statistics New Zealand Census

Findings

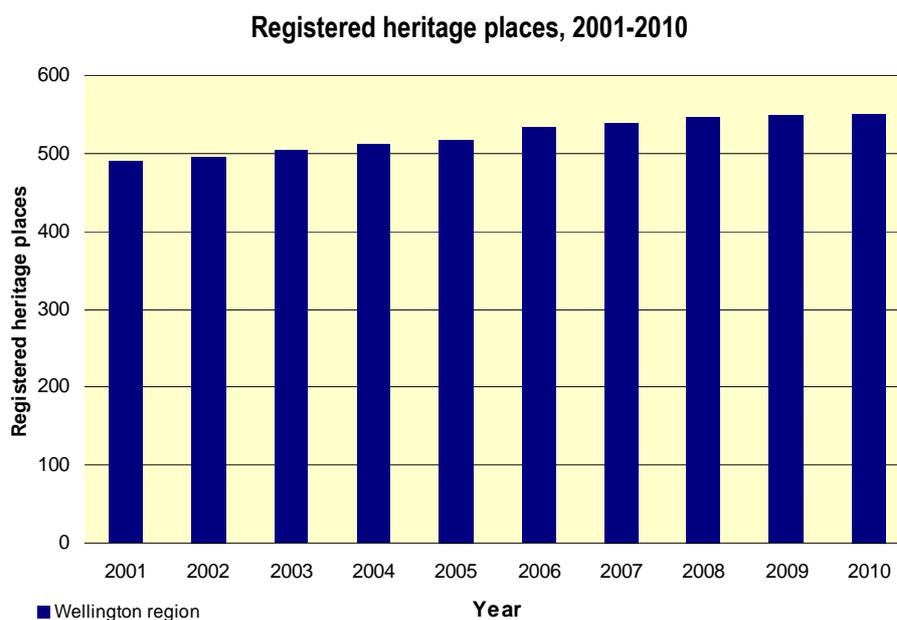
- In 2006, 28.2% of respondents in the Wellington region population identified with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups.
- Over the last two census periods (2001 to 2006) there has been an increase in the percentage of the population identifying with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups in the Wellington region.
- The percentage of the population identifying with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups was similar in the Wellington region and New Zealand in 2001. However, the rate of increase was greater for New Zealand between 2001 and 2006 resulting in New Zealand having a higher percentage of the population identifying with the Māori, Pacific and Asian ethnic groups in 2006.

3.8. Listed and registered heritage places



The number of registered heritage places has increased gradually from 2001 to 2010

Retaining cultural capital requires passing cultural resources on to future generations. New Zealand's heritage provides a link to past generations and supports the understanding of cultural origins.



Source: New Zealand Historic Places Trust

Findings

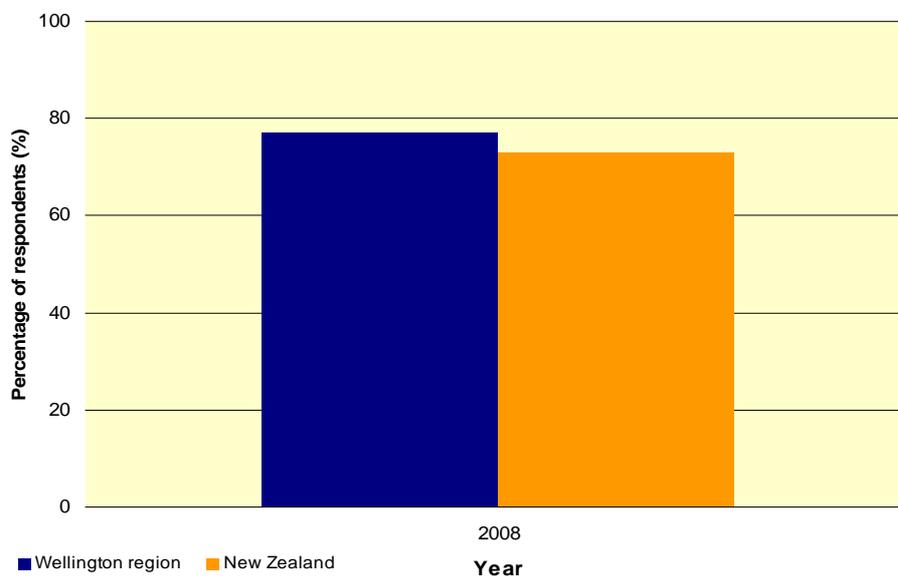
- In 2010 there were 551 places in the Wellington region listed or registered on the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Register.
- The number of historic places on the Register increased gradually from 2001 to 2006. Whilst increases have occurred since 2006 it has been at a much slower rate.

3.9. Perception of the role of culture and cultural activities in forming a sense of national identity

? No trend data is currently available

Many things influence and generate a sense of national identity. Culture and cultural activities are aspects of community identity and social life, and they are integral to helping form a national identity, community networks and preserving social knowledge.

Percentage of the population who believe that culture and cultural activities are important to New Zealand's sense of national identity, 2001-2010



Source: Ministry for Culture and Heritage

Findings

- In 2008, 77% of respondents in the Wellington region believed that culture and cultural activities are important to New Zealand's sense of national identity.
- Slightly higher percentages of the Wellington region's population believe that culture and cultural activities are important to New Zealand's sense of national identity compared to the New Zealand population overall.

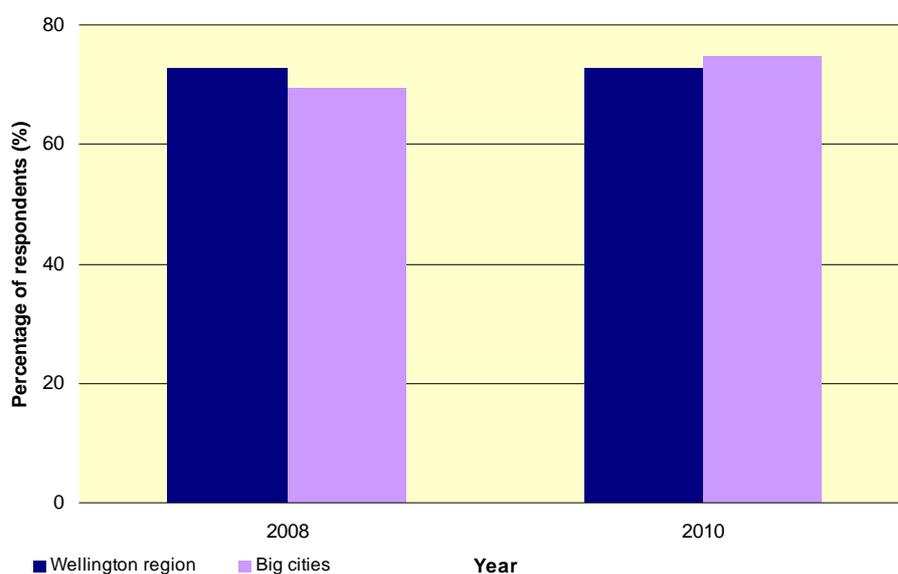
3.10. Overall positive perception of a rich and diverse arts scene



There has been little change from 2008 to 2010 in the proportion of the population who believe their area has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene

The arts make a strong contribution to community strength and identity, and are recognised for facilitating communication across social, economic, cultural and ethnic groups. A culturally rich and diverse arts scene also provides activities for people to engage in during their free time.

Percentage of the population who believe their area has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene, 2001-2010



Source: Quality of Life Survey

Findings

- In 2010, 72.6% of respondents in the Wellington region believed that the area they live in has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene.
- Between 2008 and 2010, there has been little change in the proportion of the Wellington region population who believe the area they live in has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene.
- Between 2008 and 2010, the proportion of the population from the participating eight cities, who believe the area they live in has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene, has increased.

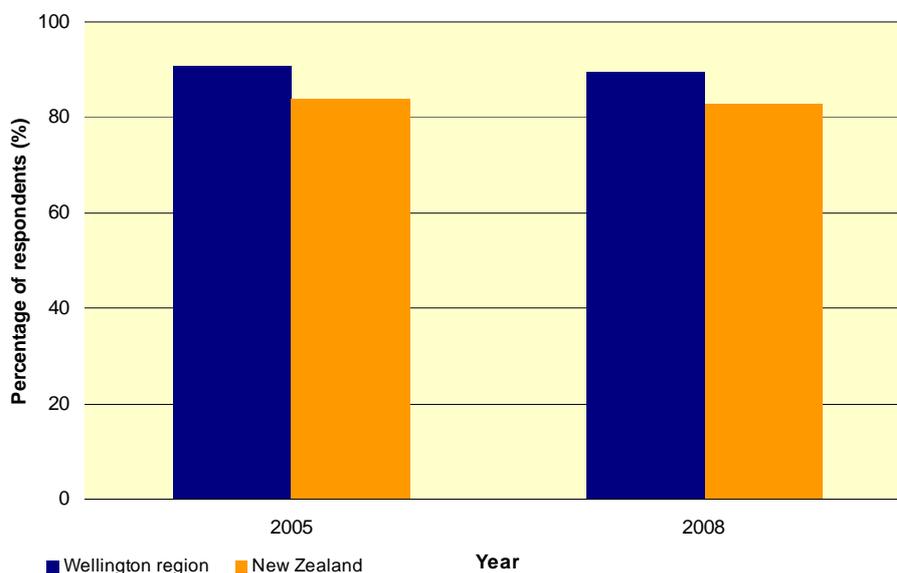
3.11. Percentage of people attending arts events



The percentage of the adult population attending at least one arts event remained unchanged between 2005 and 2008

Most types of arts involvement have a social dimension that is an important basis for building social capital and community identity. The arts, through their communicative power, enhance individual engagement with the world in ways that have both personal and public benefits. The arts sector also contributes to economic development through facilitating creativity, innovation and self-reflection.

Percentage of the adult population that have attended at least one arts event in the past 12 months, 2001-2010



Source: Creative New Zealand

Findings

- In 2008, 89.6% of respondents in the Wellington region indicated that they had attended at least one arts event in the last 12 months.
- There was little change in the proportion of the adult population attending at least one arts event in the last 12 months between 2005 and 2008.
- In both 2005 and 2008 higher percentages of the Wellington region population indicated that they had attended at least one arts event in the last 12 months, compared to the New Zealand population overall.

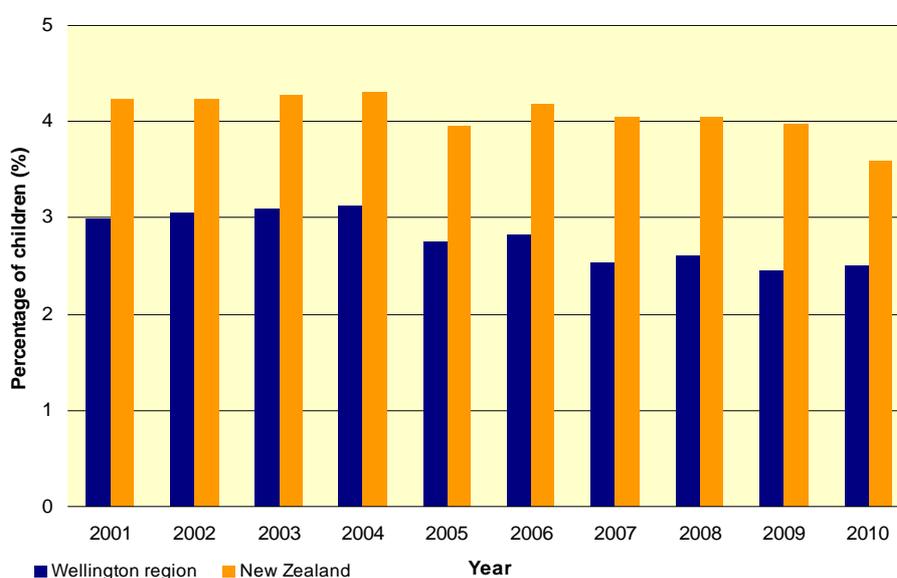
3.12. Percentage of children attending Te Kohanga Reo and Māori medium schools



The percentage of children enrolled in Māori language based education services trend information has decreased from 2001 to 2010

Kohanga Reo early childhood education centres and Māori medium schools deliver their educational instruction in the Māori language. Participation in learning the Māori language and culture is important for the retention of the Māori language and therefore the identity of New Zealand.

Percentage of the children enrolled in Māori language based education services, 2001-2010



Source: Ministry of Education

Findings

- In 2010, 2.5% of children in the Wellington region enrolled in early childhood education and schools were enrolled in Māori language based education services.
- The percentage of children in the Wellington region enrolled in Māori language based education services remained relatively constant from 2001 to 2004, and then decreased between 2004 and 2007, and has remained relatively constant since this time.
- The percentage of children in New Zealand enrolled in Māori language based education services also remained relatively stagnant from 2001 to 2004, but has gradually declined since this time.

4. Comparison of regional GPI and cultural well-being GPI

The GPI was conceived as a way to measure the region's collective well-being in terms of assessing progress towards each of the nine community outcomes. Where necessary the indexes for each community outcome indicator have been averaged to form the four composite well-being GPI's, and the four well-being GPIs have been brought together and averaged to form one composite regional GPI. Figure 3 shows the regional GPI from 2001 to 2010. The four well-being GPI's are also shown for comparison.

Other than a slight decrease between 2001 and 2002, and little change between 2009 and 2010, the regional GPI has increased over the study period. Regional GPI was at its highest in 2010 and is 5% higher in 2010 compared to 2001.

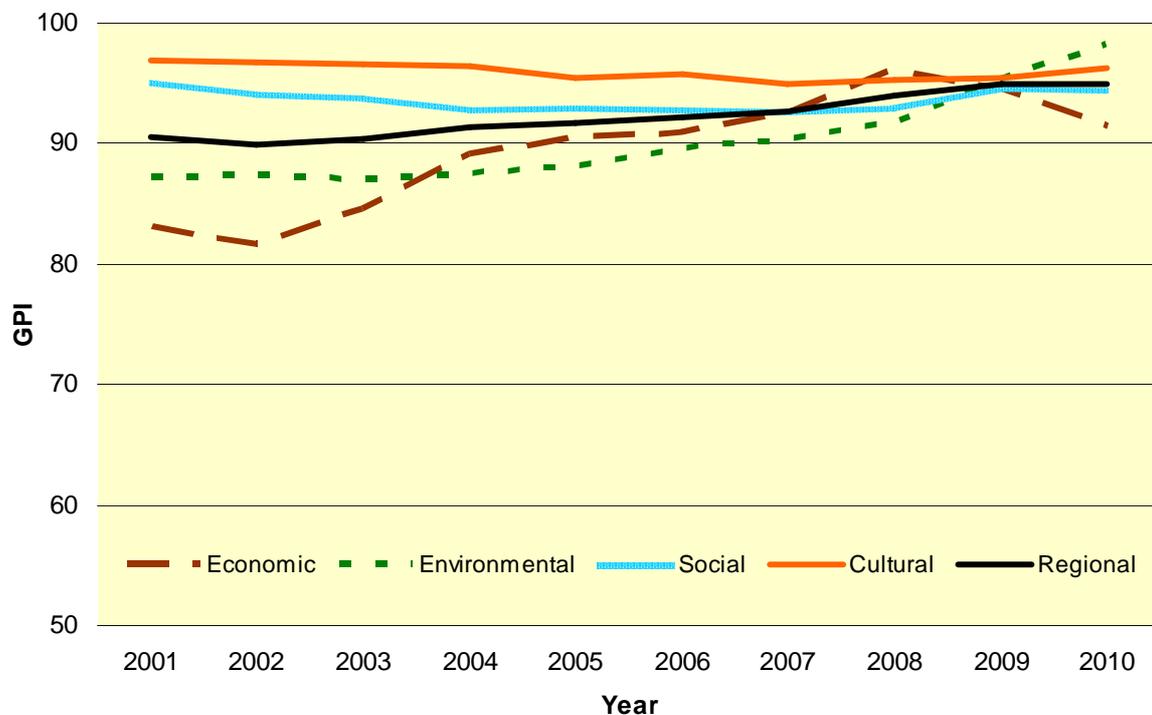


Figure 3. Comparison of overall regional GPI and the four well-being GPI's, 2001-2010

The GPI is about measuring progress and this needs to be remembered when comparing GPI's. Just because an area has a higher GPI value it does not necessarily mean that as a region we are performing better in that area. For example if we compare the cultural well-being GPI with the overall regional GPI, it is intuitive to think that we are performing better in cultural-well-being as this has a higher GPI value. What the GPI actually tells us is that between 2001 and 2010 little progress was made in the region on cultural well-being, whereas we have made some progress on our well-being overall (regional GPI).

5. Conclusion

Looking at the indicators used to measure the regions progress towards our strong and tolerant community outcomes and measure our cultural well-being it is found that there is room for improvement. Of the 12 indicators used to measure our progress, only four showed improvements, three showed declines, four remained unchanged and one indicator had only one year of data available over the 2001 to 2010 period.

The changes to the indicators meant that once converted to index values, from 2001 to 2010, there was little change in the region's GPI for strong and tolerant community or cultural well-being. Whilst this means we have made little progress since 2001 towards the strong and tolerant community outcome goals or improving our cultural well-being, as a region we are performing relatively strongly in these areas, consistently performing well in the cultural well-being GPI.

We recognise that supporting and maintaining contact with family and friends is important. The region is also becoming much more culturally diverse and we are generally positive about the benefits this brings to us as individuals and the wider community. Residents feel the region has a culturally rich and diverse arts scene, and this is supported by high attendance at arts events.

However, our performance in other areas has not been as strong. In particular, we have seen a decline in our performance relating to aspects of the Māori language (being able to hold an everyday conversation in te reo Māori and a decline in the proportion of children attending Māori language education) and civic participation. Progress in these areas would result in the largest gains in our strong and tolerant community and cultural well-being GPI.

Lastly, it must not be forgotten that a GPI is a long term monitoring tool. As a region we are just in the early stages of data collection, and have been faced with numerous challenges to get to where we are today. Over time, the data available for monitoring our progress will increase, making it easier to monitor any changes to our well-being. While the results cannot always show what is driving these changes, it can help identify adverse trends at an early stage, and if necessary point us to where there needs to be further analysis to help understand the changes and how we address them.

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