

## Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (GPI) - Communications Plan

### Purpose:

The purpose of this Communications Plan is to outline the approach for releasing the Wellington Region GPI and communicating key messages.

### Key messages:

#### *What is our first message?*

- GPI is a Genuine Progress Index – it is a way of measuring progress and well-being. This is the first time a GPI has been developed for the Wellington region. The Wellington region GPI is a holistic measure that tracks economic, social, environmental and cultural progress across the region over the past decade, rather than focusing solely on economic progress, as GDP does.

#### *What is our second message?*

- The GPI is a measure of economic progress but, unlike GDP, it distinguishes between growth that signifies an improvement in well-being and growth that signifies a decline in well-being. The GPI counts beneficial activities such as exercise, as positive and harmful activities such as smoking, as negative.

### Key Communications Channels:

The implementation of the Communications Plan will operate in eight key stages:

- Release GPI / GPI website goes live
- Media releases
- Email
- Feature articles
- Broadcast media
- Ongoing media releases
- Social media

Task	Resources	Who does it	Timeframe
Release of GPI report/ GPI website goes live	GPI report published and disseminated to key stakeholders  GPI website	WRS Office to supply members of WRS Committee with press release material	July 2011

Task	Resources	Who does it	Timeframe
		All Wellington region councils put links on their websites	July 2011
Email	Email stakeholders that report and website are now public	WRS Office	July 2011
Media releases	<p>Media releases to be timed in conjunction with the GPI report publishing date and website going live.</p> <p><u>National:</u>  DomPost  NZ Herald  Sunday Star Times</p> <p><u>Regional:</u>  GW newsletter "Our Region"</p> <p><u>Local:</u>  The Capital Times  Community newspapers  Wairarapa newspapers</p>	WRS Office with Communications staff from each of region's councils	July 2011
Feature articles	<p><u>Magazines:</u>  Next magazine  National Business Review  Listener  Good magazine</p> <p><u>Newspapers:</u>  DomPost</p>	WRS Office with GW Communications team	July 2011 - ongoing

Task	Resources	Who does it	Timeframe
	NZ Herald Sunday Star Times		
Broadcast Media	<u>Radio Stations:</u> Radio NZ (Environment and News programmes) Newstalk ZB  Could do features on Radio NZ National	WRS Office with GW Communications team	July 2011 - ongoing
Ongoing media releases	Full-Cost Accounts Feature articles (see above)	WRS Office with GW Communications team	July 2011 - ongoing
Social media	Facebook Twitter	WRS Office with GW Communications team	July 2011 - ongoing

### **Spokesperson/people:**

#### ***Who will speak on WRS's behalf?***

- Sir John Anderson and all Mayors/Chair

#### ***What other organisations need to be informed?***

- Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, New Zealand Transport Agency, TPK, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Economic Development, School of Medicine, District Health Boards, Regional Public Health, Treasury, Ministers, Councils, other regional councils, NZTE, Universities, Federated Farmers, Wellington Employers' Chamber of Commerce, Community organisations

#### ***What level of media engagement is needed?***

- Due to the complex nature of the GPI, a relatively extensive level of media engagement is required in order to get the GPI in the public domain. This is to be able to explain its messages, how it works, and how it can be used by people/organisations.
- Due to the potential for messages to be misinterpreted, we will release well explained, plain English media releases and feature articles that use simple, everyday examples.

## Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (GPI) Questions and Answers

### What is a GPI?

The GPI is a holistic measurement tool that government and communities can use to account for the real costs and benefits of economic activity. It counts beneficial activities as positive, harmful activities as negative, and provides a systematic way to integrate economic issues with environmental, social and cultural concerns.

For example, the GPI counts the costs of obesity and its consequent adverse health impacts as a negative, whereas within GDP these same costs are considered positive because they contribute to economic activity through increased medical costs.

### How can we use the GPI?

A GPI aims to measure whether a country or region's growth, increased production of goods, and expanding services have actually resulted in the improvement of the welfare (or well-being) of the people in the region or country. A GPI can distinguish between growth that signifies an improvement in well-being and growth that signifies a decline in well-being.

A GPI will enable us to make better decisions now and for the future. Valuing economic, social, environmental, human and cultural assets means decisions can be made with our overall well-being in mind and in a way that leaves a better world for our children and grandchildren.

### Will the GPI replace GDP?

The GPI is not intended to replace GDP. GDP will continue to function for the purpose for which it was intended – as a measure of exchange of goods and services in an economy. The GPI adds significantly to GDP as a measure of overall progress and well-being.

### How does the GPI measure well-being?

The GPI consists of two parts:

1. The development of indicators to measure progress and trends over time, and
2. Full cost accounts which assign monetary value to areas not valued in traditional economic assessments, such as the cost of inequality to a region.

The Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) has nine community outcomes which define the well-being goals of the strategy. By looking at the trends of the data used to measure the outcomes, we can determine whether we are making progress towards those goals.

The GPI puts a value on things we say are most important, such as our health, education, a clean environment, decent living standards, economic security, feeling connected to our community, and our overall quality of life.

### **Why was a GPI done for the Wellington region?**

In the development of the WRS it was considered important to measure well-being in the region. The main aim of the GPI is to measure the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the Wellington region. The GPI is based on these four aspects of well-being and the nine WRS community outcomes that represent the well-being goals of the region.

### **Why does data not provide local detail?**

The data does not include local detail because this is a regional level GPI. The aim of this GPI is to achieve a regional understanding of progress, whereas local data is the domain of TA's to analyse and describe.

### **How far does the data go back to?**

The data goes back to 2001.

### **Will the GPI be repeated and if so how often?**

Yes, it is anticipated that the GPI will be updated every two years.

### **Is the GPI as robust as a measure such as GDP?**

The Genuine Progress Index is not a final product, but a small step in the direction of more comprehensive measures of progress than are currently in use. The GPI itself should be seen as a work in progress subject to continuous revision, improvement in methodologies, and inclusion of additional variables. It will continue to evolve in form and content with further research, the development of new methods of measurement, and the availability of improved data sources. It took many decades of refinement to develop the GDP to where it is today.

### **How were the indicators chosen that make up the GPI?**

Indicators were selected on the basis that they represented aspects of the community outcomes identified in the WRS. It was important that they could show clear positive or negative trends towards the well-being goals of the region. The data comes from reliable and official sources, and experts were consulted on the validity and robustness of the measures.

### **Are the indicators weighted in any way?**

The indicators are not weighted because different people attach different values to indicators and so it would be difficult to decide on weighting. It is also a very expensive process to undertake full cost accounting.

### **Why are the indicators indexed?**

In order to assess overall trends within each community outcome, particularly where the outcome combines indicators with different types of data, i.e. economic data and perception information, an index was created for each indicator.

### **Who owns the data?**

The statistics are owned by Greater Wellington Regional Council. Much of the data comes from various government agencies including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Statistics New Zealand, the NZ Transport Agency and the Department of Internal Affairs.

The data largely comes from existing sources (e.g., Statistics New Zealand, Quality of Life survey, Ministry of Social Development Social Report, Ministry of Health surveys). Other data sources include councils in the region and the Ministry of Education.

### **Are other parts of NZ considering a similar approach?**

Waikato Regional Council and Auckland Council have developed GPI's for the period 1990 to 2006, which they are currently updating. We are currently working with these councils to align our research and work.

At the national level, Statistics NZ (2008) has developed a Framework for Measuring Sustainable Development (FMSD) for the period 1970 to 2008. At the non-governmental level, the New Zealand Centre for Ecological Economics (NZCEE) is shortly to release the first iteration of a national level GPI for NZ.

## **Key Messages**

The Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (GPI) 2001-2010 is the first time the region has been able to assess how it's faring across the economic, environmental, social and cultural domains.

GPI puts a value on things that communities say are most important, such as health, education, a clean environment, decent living standards, economic security, spending time with families, feeling connected to communities, and overall quality of life.

GDP is an excellent measure of economic activity but it does not distinguish between economic activities that create benefit and those that cause harm. It can send misleading signals to policy makers when it is misused as a measure of progress or societal well-being. For example natural disasters like the Canterbury Quake can have a positive impact on GDP.

If a river is polluted, if population health declines, if crime rates increase and if voluntary work declines, from a GPI perspective these can be regarded as a reduction in well-being. On the other hand, environmental restoration, health improvements, and a strengthening of social networks and supports can be seen as an increase in well-being, and hence an increase in the GPI.

This GPI provides a much more realistic picture of how our regional well-being is changing over time. Alongside the regional GDP it can more broadly inform future policies for our area and enable us to track changes in key areas where we are really making positive gains or areas of concern to the region as a whole.

It is a very exciting piece of work that everyone should be interested in. This GPI provides citizens and policy-makers with a more accurate barometer of the well-being of the Wellington region and the overall health of the economy, which is seen in the wider context of what's happening to our environment and our society.

Activities that degrade our quality of life, like crime, pollution, stress, and environmental degradation, all make traditional economic measures such as the GDP go up. The more fish we sell, the more trees we cut down, the more cigarettes we buy, the more prisons we build, and the longer hours we work – the more the economy grows. But what does this mean for our quality of life?

This GPI enables us to put some measures around the quality of life and well-being of residents in the region as well as understand what's happening in other key areas such as the environment, culture and the economy.

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.

This GPI provides citizens and policy-makers with a more accurate barometer of the overall health of the economy, and of how our regional well-being is changing over time.

The GPI is made up of 86 indicators that cover the four aspects of well-being. What we count and measure reflects our values as a society and determines what makes it onto the policy agendas of local and central government. They can tell us whether we are better off than we used to be, whether we are leaving the world a better place for our children, and what we need to change.

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.

Studies have found that physically active adults have lower rates of lifetime illness than those who are inactive. Because regular exercisers have much less overall lifetime morbidity than those who are sedentary, medical costs avoided due to physical activity are counted as a gain in a GPI.

In more traditional economic measures smoking has been counted as a benefit to the economy. For example GDP counts sales of tobacco products, tobacco cessation products, and smoking-attributable health care costs as contributors to economic growth. However, there are substantial physical, emotional, economic, and environmental costs to tobacco use that are invisible in such conventional accounting mechanisms. By contrast the GPI counts the costs of tobacco use and tobacco-related illnesses as liabilities, rather than gains to the economy.

From a GDP perspective traffic or transport crashes contribute to GDP through legal fees and medical costs, so are regarded as a benefit. But from a GPI they are regarded as a cost. They are a leading cause of disability and death because they tend to kill or injure people at a much younger age than most other major medical risks. Traffic accidents also impose economic costs, including property damage, medical and rehabilitation costs, disability compensation payments, and lost productivity.

The GPI can give explicit value to the economic contributions of unpaid household and volunteer work that are ignored in market-based measures. The value of unpaid work to the Wellington region is estimated to be nearly \$6 billion per year.

The GPI is part of an international effort to measure the true value of various activities on our well-being. Other areas doing GPI's include Alberta and Nova Scotia in Canada.

We hope that people will go onto the website that's been created for this GPI so they can see for themselves how their region is faring.