



**"You, Taranaki, have one handle of the kit, and I, Waikato, have the other.**

**A child will come some day and gather together its contents."**

**King Tawhiao 1864**

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# Community Engagement and Empowerment Plan

*This paper can be read as a standalone document; however, we would encourage the committee to consider the contents in conjunction with submissions from Tarakin Global and Heriot-Edievale. The principals of these organisations have been key partners in the work undertaken and supported by Making Rail Work, and the submissions offer further detail of the technical requirements of a passenger rail network across NZ and a potential framework (Cooperative model) for delivery of the service.*

*Primarily the work of all three organisations in relation to this submission is focused on a rail proposition for the Golden Triangle (Auckland-Waikato-Bay of Plenty) however it has scope and growth potential for wider application across Aotearoa New Zealand*

## Introduction:

*Making Rail Work* is a proudly apolitical organisation - we focus on the 'why' of rail and collaborating with others on the 'how' and 'what.'

Our role is to grow the conversation and public interest in passenger rail as a mode for connecting people and communities. We seek to inform and influence policy, engage with likeminded individuals and organisations who see passenger rail as a viable future transport mode, and work with others to deliver sustainable future-proofed services to the people of Aotearoa.

Along with the challenges thrown at the Te Huia service by Covid, there has renewed interest in the impact of climate change. Along with this are emerging discussions about the future of work, the increased attractiveness of doing business across the 'Golden Triangle,' the impact of the cost of housing and transport, higher than ever productivity and employment, and the ever-growing voice of Rangatahi. This has led to the next 'someone should do something' conversation in which highly experienced professionals working in government policy, transport design and other related fields, have come together to regroup, working under the umbrella of '*Making Rail Work*.'

Over the last 10 years, the work of TRON (now *Making Rail Work*), which started with a simple Facebook page, has grown into a comprehensive but thoughtfully targeted communications strategy supported by research, expert advice, and media engagement. Social media engagement via Facebook and LinkedIn has allowed us to connect with many otherwise isolated groups and individuals. Regular interviews on talkback radio, Radio NZ and mainstream television news have kept our mission alive, with the most recent interview on TVNZ's 6 o'clock news being filmed as Te Huia made its inaugural journey from Hamilton to Auckland.

We have been active contributors to local and regional council long term plans, participated in transport forums, and members of the group have held (and in some cases continue to hold) influential and high-profile positions within organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Waka Kotahi and Kiwirail. We do not hold placards - there are others who are doing this - but we do create space for conversations and action. We support the work of other groups such as Save our Trains but take a different approach. We do however want to make a clear stand regarding recent protests in Wellington: we do not, and will not, support the actions of these activists.

As thought leaders in this space, we have now turned attention to examining what would an expanded service look like. Whilst *Making Rail Work* has a firm focus on engagement, outreach and advocacy, our partners have provided the research and expertise for sustainable passenger rail. We look forward to the next stage of this exciting project.

## Building on momentum



Peter McBride, Chair of Fonterra, states that a co-op model will only work if it makes economic sense. *Making Rail Work* continues to be at pains to ensure that this truth is at the core of our storytelling

The personal and professional relationships each member of *Making Rail Work* brings to this project have created a strong platform for change. This is supported by the solid research already completed, the 'track record' of success in advocacy and public engagement, and the vision for creating an economically viable, culturally relevant, and sustainable solution for passenger rail in New Zealand.

We are heartened by various projects underway around Aotearoa, in particular the commissioned research about fast rail, the reopening of the Hamilton underground station, the extension of 'the main trunk line' through to Palmerston North, and other projects in the South Island. Regardless of the outcomes of these initiatives, we see all positive activity that raises the awareness and interest. We are also proud to see the Tarakin Global research referenced that triggered the select committee enquiry. *Making Rail Work* believes that using the co-operative model to help design passenger services in the golden triangle could be a successful way to ensure that it is used and promoted within communities.



## Where to from here

Our tailored communications strategy will further engage, educate, and call these groups to action, telling the story of a collaborative approach to 'making it happen' - this includes:

- growing our digital presence (Facebook, LinkedIn, Website)
- regular press releases and other media engagement
- a growing database of interested parties and key influencers
- an education programme to engage communities (especially young people) who live on or near the proposed corridor



## Case Study: TRON - The Rail Opportunity Network

### "Someone Should Do Something"

**On a regular commute to 'head office' in Queen Street and caught in traffic in peak hour traffic on the southern motorway heading into Auckland yet again, the General manager of a high-profile internet provider remarked to a passenger 'what we need is a train from Hamilton.' Right there in the car, a Facebook group was set up, and thus the 'We want a commuter train between Auckland and Hamilton' lobby group was born. Over the next few months, the two members of the group crossed paths with others who felt the same - politicians, business leaders, industry experts and simply good old train lovers and interest grew.**

**In 2012, this small group of rail advocates met to discuss the growing transport challenges between Hamilton and Auckland, and subsequently held a public meeting at the Frankton Hotel (historically the accommodation of train users last century). Attended by Mayors, MPS and other business leaders, the outcome was a rebrand to TRON: The Rail Opportunity Network.**

**Increased media interest, a comprehensive action plan, and strong advocacy (supported by political will) ensued. TRON took a lead role, including commissioning independent research via the University of Waikato, submitting on regional long-term plans, and investing time getting feedback and support from stakeholders across business, community, central and local government, iwi, and actual providers like Kiwirail.**

**With the eventual and strong support from central and local government, Te Huia was established in 2020 and despite the challenges from the pandemic, continues to show growth in passenger numbers.**

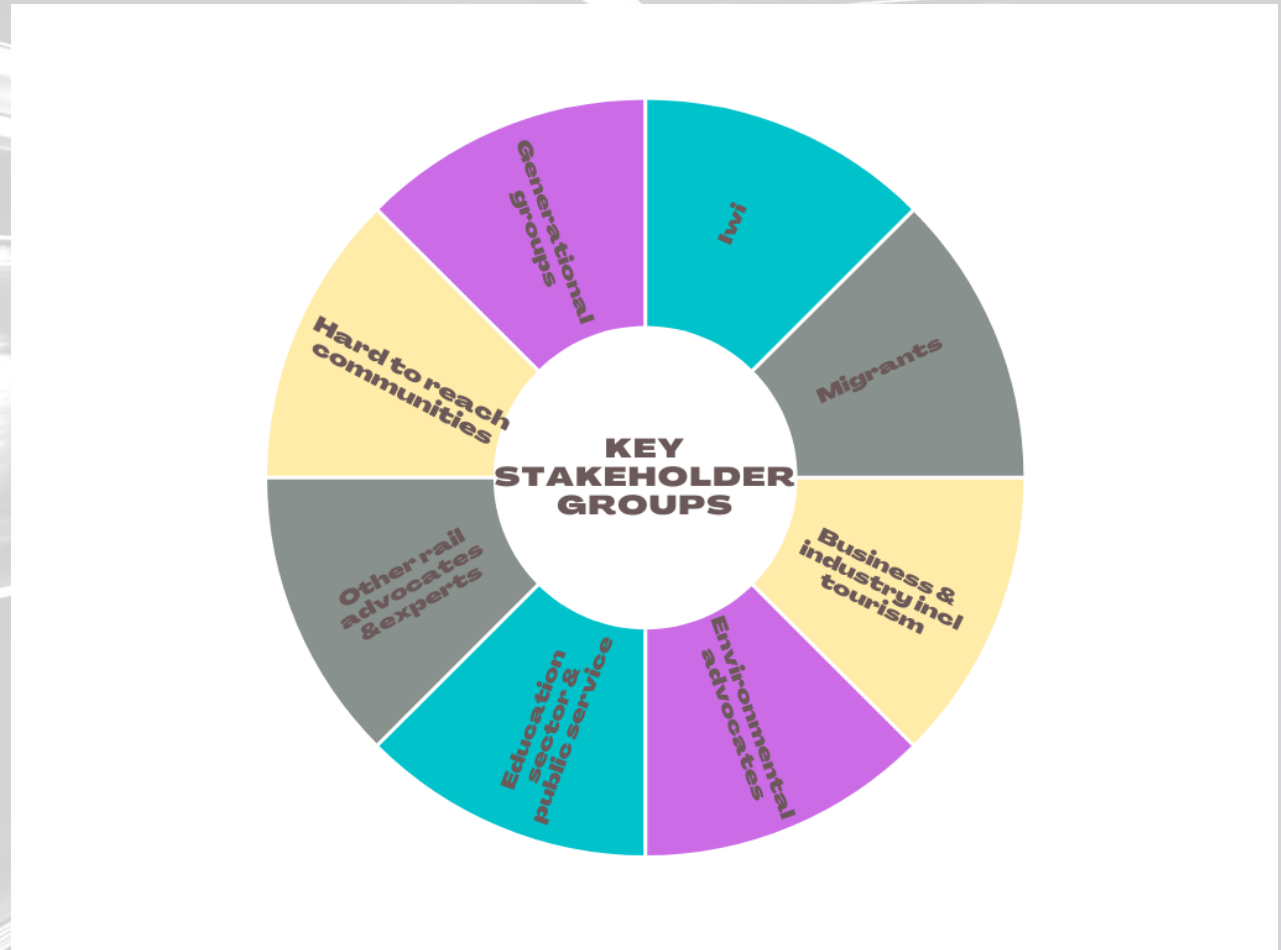
In addition, the ongoing engagement in political, business and community circles, each owned by key members of *Making Rail Work*, ensures our engagement is timely, high quality, relevant and meaningful.

As we look to the next stage of re-establishing passenger rail, we are keenly aware of the groups who have been largely invisible in the conversation. This includes the small towns along the rail lines where public transport is almost non-existent, the gen X, Y and Z population who is motivated to use sustainable, climate-responsive, and accessible public transport, and iwi, whose very land and people are directly impacted.

Isolated communities such as people with disabilities are important to reach and we intend to use guidelines already published by Manatu Hauora for this work (<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/making-services-better-users/community-engagement-people-disabilities>)

We are aware that not all people are technology savvy, or may even have an internet connection, and so our communication strategy includes significant face to face activity to ensure we reach even the most isolated of communities. We will continue to build relationships with organisations such as Blindlowision NZ, Decypher (translation and interpreting services) and NZDSN to enable us to reach isolated groups.

Our stakeholder engagement framework (refer to the Tarakin Framework) will enable meaningful and relevant communications with each of the identified groups. It will ensure that we manage stakeholder expectations and treat the time our stakeholders allocate to this work respectfully and professionally. We are particularly interested in increasing engagement with Maori, and are building a relationship with Waikato Tainui in the first instance to ensure we offer culturally appropriate communications and processes for engagement.



***“Children, after all, are not just adults-in-the-making. They are people whose current needs and rights and experiences must be taken seriously.”***

***Alfie Kohn (American Author)***

## **Rangatahi Engagement**

The second part of this submission focuses on specific research, comms, and outreach plans with youth as we identify them as probably the most important group to engage with- not only will the decisions (or lack thereof) made today affect them in future years, but we understand and appreciate the value that motivated, engaged and politically astute young people add to this conversation.

Our Youth Engagement lead is already politically active, engaged, and brings an authentic voice to the conversation about the needs, wants and aspirations of Rangatahi. Mary, a year 13 student with active interest in politics and community activation has taken the lead in this work.

Engagement and mobilization of young people as part of the *Making Rail Work's* community engagement and outreach programme will be crucial in ensuring a sustainable future for passenger rail. We continue to deepen our relationship with iwi, in particular Waikato Tainui and its surrounding whanau, who care deeply about their people, and the land they live work and learn on.

This segues into our goals of engaging the University of Waikato, who have campuses in Hamilton and Tauranga - and students across the Triangle, as well as the opportunity to grow conversations with Waikato-Tainui and Tainui Group Holdings about their aspirations for the inland port and surrounding areas. Both of these are highly supportive of the work undertaken by *Making Rail Work*, as well as developing their own strategies.

We have also learned from one of the world's best examples of engagement and activation programmes, the UN Youth HSA Program (which is active in Aotearoa New Zealand)

- HSAs speak on the organization's behalf but run clubs, programmes, and promotions in their respective schools
- UN Youth uses Model UN as means to share ideas, bring inspirational speakers and MP
  - Creates a close-knit community
  - Runs social media pages and/or promotes the UN Youth Organization's facebook and Instagram page that are both serious and informal to garner respect from the teenage audience but still be not intimidating for students



## Our goals:

- A youth engagement strategy in community rail through volunteer work in areas like rail safety, travel knowledge, youth-based travel projects, etc.
- Reaching out to a youth voice with genuine interest in rail and the betterment of the New Zealand community and economy for the future

## Research summary:

### Why are Youth interested?

- Want to link New Zealand together by their different regions
- Despite the ages, youth are interested in fixing the 'economic mess and looking towards economic expansion since they will be the ones suffering from its dire consequences: inflation from high rising housing prices to petrol prices
- Drawing more youth voices increases community inclusivity in the short-term and long-term, especially since these decisions will greatly affect Rangatahi generations as supposed to older adults who get most of the say
- Intergenerational Engagement: it is not productive for the older generations to put the pressure on Youth to fix their mistakes, nor is it productive for youth to blame the older generations for the damage that has been caused from an environmental and economic view. "We must work and support each other towards the unanimous goal of sustainability and longevity of Aotearoa by building stronger relationships within the community"
- Many were drawn to the Cooperative structure being proposed - youth can and take part as stakeholders who can share their input and concerns toward the project and ensures rangatahi who aren't yet paying taxes would have a say in infrastructure

### Concerns:

- Rail is not seen as a viable replacement for public transport within regions but rather a means to bridge regions together
- If rail was to be considered an alternative to public transport, we must consider the high running and upfront costs
- Larger areas have larger expenses and opportunity cost in rural areas compared to larger/concentrated links in Auckland (given the amount of sunk costs from current rail link projects)
- Incentives for people to frequently contribute to the Cooperative and ensure that funding targets for the rail link are met on a consistent basis (presumption that individuals have vast freedom and lack of accountability which can halt the development of the rail-link)

## Why should all NZ citizens be involved (from the rangatahi perspective)?

- We are supposedly a team of five million, but we can't be a team without connections within the five million
- These networks are what would keep people in the country the foundation for business and job opportunities that people try find outside of New Zealand as people can work in a variety of regions with minimized commute and fuel costs
- Many in rural areas are unhappy with the lack of public transport within their own communities and feel disconnected from the rest of the regions (especially in Auckland)
- Only Auckland and Wellington have metropolitan rail system whereas the rest of New Zealand have less established forms of rail - we must rely on commute and vehicles for transport but given the long routes and rising gas prices, it's become more difficult - Rural Areas have limited public transport: areas like Hamilton have only one train that leaves at 5am in the morning in Te Kowhai to go to Auckland, 15km north west of Hamilton City
- Given the fresh and up to date views Youth have, amplified by social media, this allows community and volunteer groups involved in rail to respond flexibly and effectively to current issues in the economy
- People living in larger and developed regions in New Zealand will also benefit as expanding economies in other regions via the Rail Link will increase the supply of housing, infrastructure, and facilities, decreasing overall living costs in the long-term.
- Opens more opportunities to students in rural areas and puts students on a similar playing field to students in larger developed regions who have more links to facilities like universities and other educational institutions
- Important for supporting the necessary changes to lowering our carbon emissions Proposed plan of action/Main Takeaways: (<https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Youth-engagement-report-final.pdf>)

## Who else do we need to talk to?

We have identified key organizations targeting teenagers, some of which are NZ wide, and others that have specific purpose but may be supportive of our own goals:

Climate Action Hub

Generation Zero

Puketaoaoa Youth Foundation

School Strike 4 action

Empower Youth NZ Youth Leaders

Rotary and Interact Clubs

Rainbow Youth

UN Youth NZ







***This table outlines a summary of research on general youth activism we have undertaken. This provides a real life, 'kiwi driven' snapshot of views and perspectives of young people in Aotearoa, which closely reflects the extensive work undertaken by organisations like the International Youth Foundation***

<p><b>Why do teenagers not want to contribute?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They do not think they will be impacted (Short-term vs long-term impact)</li><li>• Priorities focused on school, friends, other activities</li><li>• Lack of knowledge regarding rail might turn them away</li><li>• Intimidated by organization</li><li>• Lack of knowledge in which ways they can help</li><li>• May not be in a position to commit to high level of work and are Expecting (teenagers will most likely join if there is already a large establishment of people where they implement less work)</li><li>• May be nervous and too scared that they may not deliver dependent on the tasks that are set for them, especially given how big of a scale that the inter-link city is</li><li>• Delegated tasks and roles may not be clear to them - might be deterred by the specifics of rail and if there is not a specific goal/task for them</li></ul>	<p><b>Potential issues in outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short attention span</li><li>• Media and attention can easily lose momentum due to how fast trends start and finish unless there is more promotion and direction to support it</li><li>• Lack of consistency in reaching out: how do we make rail an idea that remains relevant to the media in the long-term?</li><li>• If they are too exposed to one social media outlet, they will feel overloaded and will lose interest altogether</li></ul>
<p><b>Effective methods of large outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Petitions</li><li>• Instagram stories</li><li>• Articles with hooking headlines</li><li>• Stories from teenagers personally impacted by the problem or would be benefitted by the solution</li><li>• Events for genuinely passionate teenagers</li></ul>	<p><b>Places of emphasis: (using current issues to allow teenagers to feel more incentivized in wanting to be part of the organization)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Climate change and sustainability</li><li>• High living costs attribute to daily living problems</li><li>• Tourism and travel around New Zealand</li></ul>

## Case study: Youth engagement

A growing number of social scientists in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, and the US, are questioning developmental psychology models that favor the view of the young "as persons in the making." Instead, they support perspectives that incorporate youth as protagonists who by going to school, working, being members of families, having friendships, and making choices, are very much a part of the social process.

Over the years, we have seen that through opportunities to participate in a community's affairs, young people gain self-esteem, confidence, and essential life skills such as decision making, conflict management, teamwork, and the ability to work in diverse environments. As they build these competencies, youth begin to think of themselves as partners and stakeholders in society. They also acquire a sense of responsibility for the common good and internalize a positive attitude toward active citizenship.

A public recognition of young people as key players in the social process has been strengthened through the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the most widely ratified international agreement, which affirms the right to participation for all people up to 18 years of age.

By stating that "all children have a right to express their views and to have them taken into account in all matters that affect them," the document recognizes youth participation as an integral element in a community's life.

(abridged) - reference:

[https://iyfglobal.org/sites/default/files/WW\\_Youth\\_Participation.pdf](https://iyfglobal.org/sites/default/files/WW_Youth_Participation.pdf)

## Case Study: Engagement of Youth in economic and political activity

**Purpose:** to show that Rangatahi are willing to be involved in rail and want their opinions/stance on rail, public transport and other correlating topics to be taken into consideration on parliamentary level <https://www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/youth-parliament-2022/watch-youth-parliament/>

**AYD Declaration Additions (specific wants pertaining to rail and issues rail could potentially mitigate)**

- Recognizes the needs of rural communities in terms of funding and planning rail link projects
- Applying ideas from the Rapid Regional Rail Plan: high speed public transport is especially important to Rangatahi who desire quick and reliable journeys that offset the speed of driving and traffic
- Free public transport to incentivize public transport
- Implores the government to partner with local iwi and Rangatira in governance and solution-making for climate change (and potentially rail) to uphold our obligations under Te Tiriti



## DRAFT COMMS STRATEGY FOR YOUTH

### *Direct community outreach*

- Using different incentives: people who will be interested in politics and government will be interested in the networking and social activism aspect of the project whereas rangatahi who prefer to stay at an arm's reach on the project will be interested in the benefits that don't directly pertain to rail like prizes, having something to write on their CV, making friends via the event, etc.
- Having an established and easy way for them to actively engage and volunteer, working with other rangatahi (teenagers enjoy working with other like-minded teenagers, seeing other people of a similar age will inspire other rangatahi to do the same)
- Creating one main incentive that directly pertains to young people, then expand from there accordingly to different problems that arise from a lack of rail that rangatahi are already advocating for (e.g., climate change, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, immigration reform, etc.)

### *Social media engagement strategy*

- To remain relevant: we need to link transport to current issues that rangatahi see on a daily basis such as climate change, high economic costs
- Similar to marketing brands and outlets, our youth engagement strategy must have in real life engagement with the team where they can see our faces to establish our values and community approach
- Using different outlets and promoting them on different social medias to show not only rangatahi but the general public about our engagement with others
- Using community groups and leaders to create a larger network of contact and engagement on social media platforms, making the promotion of rail via 'Making Rail Work' a more credible and respectable organization
- Making original content: young people want to feel like they are part of the journey before even starting to make original content: this can include daily video blogs, memes of the issue, however still establishing a fine line between respect and being relatable. This can be similar to how political parties create content on their pages, ranging from memes to more visual political statements
- Before reaching out to the community directly, potentially via community forums, assemblies, etc., we need to have an active and well-established social media page



# FINAL THOUGHTS

*Next steps (summary of engagement section)*

- a. Implement comms plan
- b. Scope, develop and deliver community consultation plan
- c. Expand and deliver youth engagement programme via stakeholders including schools along the rail corridor
- d. Identify key stakeholders for partnership in delivery; Continue to build database

The inquiry into passenger rail is not the end for us. This is a milestone and an important one. We enjoy strong relationships with other rail advocacy groups who have taken a wider position about passenger rail but are committed to sticking to our core purpose of focusing on a sustainable solution for Hamilton - Tauranga as the next step.

Following a successful bid with Bay Trust, we are delighted to announce that we have now received funding from Trust Waikato to move forward with the next tranche of work.

We believe that growing and maintain public interest, sharing crucial information both widely, and specifically with key stakeholders, as well continuing to take a strong advocacy position through public submission, media presence and community building, are all crucial building blocks in the process of regeneration of passenger rail in New Zealand.

**FIND OUT MORE:** [www.makingrailwork.com](http://www.makingrailwork.com) | Facebook: *Making Rail Work* | Linked In: *Making Rail Work*

**'Making Rail Work' was formerly known as TRON The Rail Opportunity Network**

**Ā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi**

***With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive***