Story of New Zealand’s First Restorative City

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Towards a Restorative City: Honoa ki a Rongo ki Whanganui

About Whanganui: Where are We?

Drive time:
- 2 1/5 hours to Wellington
- 2 1/5 hours to New Plymouth
- 6 hours to Auckland

Source: Census, 2013
This Whakatauki (proverb) belongs to the Awa and the words embody the spiritual, cultural and historical relationship and defines the Iwi (Māori people) of the Whanganui River and region. Traditionally used by local Māori, this saying has become increasingly relevant to locals of European descent whose lives and history have also become interwoven by the river.
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About Whanganui: Statistics

Whanganui established in 1840

Age:
- 40% 50 years+
- 28% 25-49 years
- 32% under 24 years

77% European / 22% Maori

42,150 population

11% of NZ’s heritage buildings

Labour Force = 80% Population
- 57% employed
- 43% unemployed

Beneficiaries = 14%

Top Three Industries:
- 15% health care & social assistance
- 14% manufacturing
- 10% education & training

Source: Census 2011, Whanganui District Council
Realisation that something wasn’t right with the world ignited the Trustees’ passion to make changes at home
In 1998 a meeting was organised to discuss restorative justice for adults based on the question “why can’t family group conferences be used for adult offenders?”
Over 100 people turned up including, Judge Andrew Becroft – resident court judge at the time.

Everyone was asked to say what Restorative Justice was to them and there were nearly a hundred different answers! From:
- involving boot camps,
- residential rehabilitation
- only in marae justice,
- no courts at all
- RJ in prison

Numerous meetings took place with the numbers dropping off as consensus was reached. RJ needed to be a real option – not one where the offender avoided the law. This last point urged the Trust to involve the courts and
Justice system. Judge Becroft was instrumental in the Trust being heard.
In 1999 the Restorative Justice Trust was established about the same time as a similar Trust in Timaru. A few years later the Ministry of Justice adopted the RJ programme in all the district courts. The Whanganui RJ Trust is still successfully providing service to Ministry of Justice and is managed by a highly experienced Facilitator - Sue Anderson.
About 4 years ago the Justice Trust offered support to the local schools who were implementing a restorative approach through the Ministry of Education’s Positive Behaviour for Learning programme.
At the same time they heard about the work of Estelle MacDonald in Hull and Jennifer Llewellyn in Halifax and decided RP shouldn’t be confined to justice and education, but it was something the whole community could benefit from.
Restorative City Journey: Restorative Practices Trust

“Sixteen years successfully working with others who have the same belief”

“Sixteen years sharing in the successes and building resilience together so we have the strength and desire to transform negativity”

“Restorative City concept is the perfect vehicle to make a difference, albeit a long term project”

Buoyed by their success in Justice and tapping into the connections they’d made, the Trust got to work and
- held an agency meeting in 2012 to introduce the concept and gain support
- presented to various Council Committees,
- invited Estelle and Jennifer to speak at various opportunities, along with Margaret Thorsborne, Paul Nixon, Chief Social Worker for MSD, Andrew Becroft, Principal Youth Court Judge, Greg Jansen and Rich Matla from Restorative Schools in Chch
Judge Andrew Becroft agreed to be the Trust’s Patron.
With full time jobs, the Trust needed to employ someone to “pull the strings” together and grow some legs on the vision.
In 2013, Shelly Harkness was employed as a Facilitator for Restorative Practices Whanganui.
The Trust had also developed a relationship with Mark Corrigan, at the MoE, who’s job at the time was half education and half restorative practice. That position has now changed but the Trust are grateful to Mark for his early and ongoing expertise.
Restorative City Journey: Vision

Creating the environment for all Whanganui people to thrive and succeed, together, through respectful relationships.
Restorative City Journey: Simple Vision!

Making Friends
Keeping Friends
Helping them when they get Hurt

Restorative City vision from a 8 year old’s perspective.
The Trust acknowledged the weight of a vision of this magnitude and formed an Advisory Group made up of key leaders from a cross sector of the Whanganui city.

At first neither the Trust nor the Advisory Group were sure of what each were to do, nor what was needed, what was available and how to do it!

It took a good 18 months and 7 meetings later for the relationship to be clarified and described as:

*The Trust have the passion and energy for holding and driving the vision*

*The Advisory Group are the providers of industry knowledge, resources and the promoters of RP in their own organisations*
Te Runanga o Tupoho represent 10 hapu in the Whanganui and surrounding areas from the ocean end of the river reaching up to Mount Ruapehu. Iwi representatives, Desiree McLean and Beryl Miller, support the Trust’s work and are beginning a journey together of getting to know each other and building a relationship of understanding and trust.
Restorative City Journey: Iwi Relationship

Te Runanga o Tupoho: “Kotahitanga”
To promote a Te Runanga o Tupoho culture based upon a knowledge of a shared heritage and an understanding and celebration of cultural distinctiveness. To also act as a collective unified force for the betterment o nga hapu o Tupoho.

Whanganui Restorative Practices Trust: “Restorative City”
Creating an environment where all Whanganui people can thrive and succeed together through respectful relationships.

In time, together Iwi and the Trust will consider a shared framework or goals to work towards and the ongoing nature of the relationship in regards to the respective visions.
The Trust are often asked ...what does a Restorative City look like? Our recent leaflet explains.
As the Restorative City vision is ...well...city wide, the Trust decided to break it down to strands of work to focus time and resources.
Some work was done on HOW were the Trust to do all this? What was needed?

**Working Towards: Actions**
- Developing Capability and Resources
- Raising Awareness
- Building Connections
- Gaining Support
- Measuring Implementation
Actions: Developing Capability and Resources

- Within Trust
  - training, knowledge, practice, self-reflection, promotional material, library
- Within Organisations
  - Site Champions
- Within Whanganui
  - Cross Sector
Raising Awareness
Presentations, Media, Conversations, Learning Opportunities, Website, Database, City Signage, Video
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Actions: Building Connections and Gaining Support

International Learning Community – Hull, Leeds, Halifax, Wellington & Whanganui
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Actions: Building Connections and Gaining Support

Building Connections
- Trustees’ connections
- Advisory Group formation
- Networking (Local / National / International)
  - Hull, Leeds, Halifax, Minnesota, Baltimore, Melbourne, Canberra, Hobart
- Cross Sector sharing

Gaining Support
- Local:
  - Civic Leadership / Safer Whanganui, Iwi, SKIP, local organisations
- National:
  - Ministry of Social Development, Victoria University
- International Learning Community:
  - Hull, Leeds, Halifax, Wellington, Whanganui
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Action: Measuring Implementation

A Restorative City is where the Whanganui population:
- enjoy a safe, valuing environment
- value relationships based on respect, consent, care and dignity
- have their voices heard and are tolerant of differing views

A Restorative City can be measured by:
- reduced child abuse, domestic violence and other criminal activities
- reduced absenteeism, truancy and increased academic achievement in schools
- reduced absenteeism, bullying & violence in workplaces and increased productivity
- more people feeling safe within their homes and walking the streets
- increased sense of community belonging

Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships

We are biologically wired to connect with each other. In other words, we have evolved to survive by living in social settings. We care about others and we need others to care about us.

With this in mind, we need to actively build positive relationships. A Restorative City is a pioneer tool used between two or more people. It can be stressful building relationships but in community and also transform harmed relationships.

Repairing Harmed Relationships

Individuals and communities thrive best in an environment of positive relationships. Through all stages of a restorative process, following restorative questions help us understand what went wrong and how to move beyond the harm in a safe and respectful way.

The questions are about in a non-judgmental manner. One is afford for answers and the people involved are the people who share the answers

To ask someone who has Caused Harm
- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected, and how?
- What needs to happen to fix things?
- How can we make sure this doesn’t happen again in the future?

To ask someone who has Been Harmed
- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What effect did this incident have on you, and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS AT THE HEART OF:
- CULTURE
- JUSTICE
- EDUCATION
- FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES
- NEIGHBOURHOOD
- WORKPLACES
**Towards a Restorative City: Honoa ki a Rongo ki Whanganui**

**Action: Measuring Implementation**

**Workplace Survey**
Helps to:
- identify areas to build and strengthen staff culture;
- identify the quality of problem solving tools;
- adapt restorative practice learning;
- measure the outcomes of a restorative approach within an organisation; and
- measure the outcomes of a Restorative City.

**Restorative City Evaluation**
An evaluative framework is being developed in collaboration with Victoria University and the Ministry of Social Development.

adapted for the Restorative City vision by Mark Corrigan,
Senior Advisor – Ministry of Education
Challenges

“What is it?”

Time – restorative is not a quick fix
Word “restorative”

“nebulous”, “airy fairy”, “tree hugging”

Difference between RP and Mediation

Not-For-Profit – “head above water”

Individual - “why should I listen to someone who burgled my house? They should be taken out and shot”

Private Enterprise – “staff turn up anyway so why should I invest in them?”
Challenges: an answer

He aha te mea nui o te ao?
He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!

What is the most important thing in the world?
It is people! It is people! It is people!
WHANGANUI RESTORATIVE PRACTICE CONFERENCE

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