



MEDIA RELEASE

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Reimagining Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: harnessing the region's potential

RELEASE SUMMARY

- *Reimagining Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland* – a report by Koi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures – presents nine scenarios on Auckland's future to stimulate conversation and debate.
- Report commissioned by Auckland Unlimited with support from Auckland Council, Auckland Policy Office and Council Controlled Organisations to look at Auckland's 50-year future.
- Scenarios challenge decision-makers to make transformative change – including rethinking Auckland's structures for governance, management, planning and funding.
- Report calls for Auckland Commissioner for Future Generations and use of participative and deliberative democracy for Aucklanders to better engage in decision-making.
- Auckland Unlimited interested in progressing the Region of Creativity and Culture and Innovative Region scenarios. Other CCOs and business groups keen to help bring other scenarios to life.

What could Auckland become within two generations? How do we become a truly global, liveable and sustainable city that is fit for the future?

Reimagining Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: harnessing the region's potential – a report released today by Auckland's economic and cultural development agency Auckland Unlimited – explores the changes needed for Auckland to reach its potential.

The independent report, written by Koi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures, is intended to stimulate open-minded conversation and debate.

Auckland Unlimited Chief Executive Nick Hill says Koi Tū was asked to think ahead about Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's long-term future. "Rather than focus on today's plans, strategies and budgets we asked them to leap forward two generations – about 50 years – to suggest the kinds of evolution the region needs."

The report presents nine integrated scenarios to provoke discussion about where the region is headed, from 'a socially cohesive region' and 'a region of quality education', to 'a national park city' (see notes below for the full list). It also suggests how the scenarios could be enabled by aligning local and central Government planning and strategy.

Nick Hill says Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland is Aotearoa New Zealand's largest and most diverse city. It is the economic and financial capital of New Zealand, and the country's main gateway for people and goods. Auckland has the largest Māori and one of the largest Polynesian populations in the world and will soon be a region of two million people – a remarkable resource for the entire country.

He says the time is right for well-informed, deep and wide discussions about Auckland's future:

- It is more than 10 years since the eight former Auckland councils were amalgamated
- The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed our perceptions of normality
- We need to explore new ways for central and local government to engage for long term projects.

Koi Tū director and report co-author Sir Peter Gluckman said the scenarios describe a view of Auckland in 2070, setting the stage for a better life for future generations of Aucklanders. The scenarios are based on more than 120 expert and stakeholder interviews and focus groups to capture a range of perceptions, trends and dynamics.

“The scenarios represent pragmatic outcomes that could harness the potential of Auckland’s many assets, including those that are under-appreciated and under-leveraged. Some changes build on existing plans, others suggest bolder moves to reduce inequities in opportunity and access to services and amenities, and to enhance social cohesion, sustainability, liveability and connection to the natural environment, while supporting a thriving innovation ecosystem that powers New Zealand’s economy.”

Sir Peter says the paper is neither a plan, nor a strategy, but an intentional provocation: “It identifies assets that could be used better and highlights the barriers that inhibit Auckland’s progress.”

Sir Peter said the scenarios challenge decision-makers to consider transformative change: “Auckland is being impeded from reaching its potential by fragmented decision-making and funding processes, and the lack of a joined-up vision and strategy that is agreed by both central and local government and endorsed by its citizenry.

“Changing Auckland’s trajectory will require rethinking its structures of governance, management, planning and funding. Auckland’s size, shape, needs and contributions to New Zealand justify a distinct design for its governance. Central and local government need an aligned vision and long-term strategy for Auckland through a mechanism that is sufficiently stable to survive political cycles,” says Sir Peter.

The report calls for the establishment of an Auckland Commissioner for Future Generations to enhance and safeguard intergenerational planning. It also says Aucklanders need to be able to engage more actively in their own future and that of their descendants, through new ways of ensuring democracy.

Nick Hill says Sir Peter and the report’s co-authors Dr Anne Bardsley and Dr Dawnelle Clyne have socialised the report’s key findings with Auckland councillors, local board chairs, business leaders and Auckland-based government agencies receiving a largely positive response.

“Auckland Unlimited will pick up and run with the region of creativity and culture, and innovative region scenarios from the report as they fall squarely within our mandate. The report validates the work we are already doing in these areas and encourages us to accelerate it.”

Hill says Sir Peter outlined the project idea in a future-visioning speech he gave to the *Auckland’s Future, Now* event last year. “*Auckland’s Future, Now* is aptly named because there are pockets of these scenarios already happening within our region’s world-class creative industry – they just need more focus and investment.”

The report was commissioned by Auckland Unlimited with the support of Auckland Council, the Auckland Policy Office and Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs) Auckland Transport, Eke Panuku and Watercare.

Hill says Auckland Unlimited will work with other CCOs, business and other interested organisations to develop other scenarios outlined in the report. Meanwhile Auckland Council’s Democracy and Engagement team is exploring potential opportunities with Koi Tū to pilot some of the deliberative democracy approaches advocated for in the report.

“There is incredible depth in this report and it will take time for Aucklanders and government agencies to fully absorb its implications. It is insightful and inspiring and we hope it will provoke robust discussion and debate among Aucklanders and New Zealanders so Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland can realise its great potential to benefit us all.”

For further information please contact

Tim Marshall M +64 21 902 850

Chris Gregory M 0272 923 601 E chris.gregory@aucklandnz.com

About us: Auckland Unlimited is Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland’s economic and cultural agency committed to making our region a desirable place to live, work, visit, invest and do business. To find out more visit aucklandunlimited.com

Notes to editors

The nine scenarios:

1. **A socially cohesive region:** A diverse and inclusive city that celebrates different peoples, cultures and religions.
2. **A region of creativity and culture:** Creativity, culture and innovation pervade all communities.
3. **A region of quality education:** A place where all residents can access quality education for life. The education system has creativity at its heart, producing innovative thinkers who can adapt and thrive in the face of continuous change.
4. **An innovative region:** Auckland is the engine of New Zealand's weightless economy.
5. **A sustainable and resilient region:** A resilient city where future generations thrive, and people are connected to and take responsibility for the environment.
6. **A region of human-focused infrastructure, transport and housing:** Future-focused innovation and infrastructure for better quality of life for all.
7. **A region of 'integrated precincts':** A city of 'places with purpose'. People feel connected to and proud of precinct communities, and their cultural and industrial character, which provide a wide range of opportunities to live, work and play.
8. **A connected region:** Recognising and leveraging Auckland's wider regional assets.
9. **An indigenously inspired 'national park city':** An overarching, integrating scenario that enhances natural, human, cultural and social capital.

The enablers

- Auckland needs more consistent, aligned and integrated planning across multiple agencies both in Wellington and Auckland, and an agreed long-term view of Auckland's future. Without agreement between key stakeholders on the desired destination, any road will do.
- A strong caucus of Auckland MPs working regularly with the Mayor is needed.
- Planning should occur within a framework of an overall aligned strategy looking out over generations, and structures should be created to ensure this.
- Auckland's future will be greatly enhanced by the creation of a single, whole-of-Auckland planning and strategy unit with integrated data capacities.
- The relative role of central and local government merits reconsideration.
- Auckland should take a lead in incorporating participatory and deliberative democratic methodologies into its democratic processes.
- Auckland should establish mechanisms such as a Commission for Future Generations to emphasise its commitment to the future.

Region of Creativity and Culture

A 2020 report by Infometrics found Auckland's creative economy had a GDP of \$5.8 billion – five per cent of Auckland's total regional GDP – and employed more than 50,000 people (for the year ended March 2019). The creative industries generate high value, highly skilled quality jobs. Creative industries generate intellectual property and are generally a sustainable, environmentally low-impact, weightless trade sector. Creativity and culture is pivotal to our wellbeing and can drive economic transformation as a region.

Creative industries with a strong presence and significant potential for Auckland include creative technology, the Māori creative economy, convergent creative content, the Pacific creative economy, performing and visual arts and music. Examples include Auckland UNESCO City of Music, thriving cultural precincts in the city centre and communities from the north to south celebrating our diverse region, and creative technology attracting international clients from Disney to Netflix.

An Innovative Region

Auckland is New Zealand's technology hub; with Infometrics estimating the tech sector comprises more than 11,000 firms and contributes 55 per cent (\$13.6 billion) of national tech sector GDP. Auckland's tech sector is highly productive, responsible for 7.5 per cent of the region's employment with 70,000 jobs.

Auckland Unlimited will soon launch, an industry-informed three-year programme of action to accelerate Auckland's tech sector, an initiative conceived at the 2020 *Auckland's Future, Now* event. The programme will be delivered in partnership with industry, community organisations and government agencies to ensure actions and investments are aligned.

This will complement Auckland's growing entrepreneurial innovation network, including spaces such as GridAKL, GridMNK, Click Creative Tech Studios, and GridAKL / Futures Lab supporting public sector innovation.