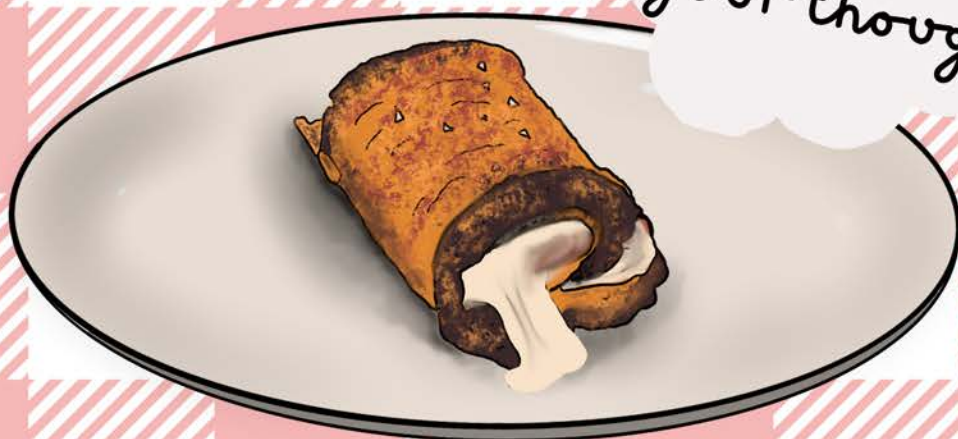




# CALL ME SOUTHLAND

Community Visioning Report

FINAL REPORT APRIL 2023



*A cheese roll for  
your thoughts?*



**Call me Southland:** an independent community engagement exercise to capture issues, aspirations, and solutions from the Southland Community.

*"We are a great people in Southland, let us get on with it".*

## Whakatakinga / Background

Shaping our Future (SoF), a not-for-profit community engagement organisation, received Lotteries Community Development funding to undertake community engagement work across the Southland region between July and December 2022.

The aim was to produce a district-wide long-term vision for Southland bringing together the distinct but separated communities. Capturing, but then turning the pressing issues of today into collective goals and aspirations for a successful future alongside a celebration of the common values that define the wider Southland community.

This enables communities to let their leaders know what they want Southland to be in 2050. What needs to be kept, what needs to be protected, and what needs to change.

This report will provide decision makers (at all levels) with a clear community direction and address community, environment, economy, and infrastructure issues.

Our engagement process starts with a blank sheet of paper, and we gather qualitative output from communities to capture solutions to current issues and a description of what long term success looks like.

Our strength is in leading the conversations that allow this to happen in a way that is open, accessible and without pre-determination.

In-person workshops were held across the Southland District at: Lumsden, Winton, Nightcaps, Te Anau, Stewart Island, Riverton and Wyndham. Students participated in sessions at Aparima and Fiordland Colleges.

An online and face to face street survey (Lumsden, Gore, Winton & Invercargill) captured further community sentiment.

We met with and our survey work was promoted by Te Tapo O Tane and Thriving Southland staff. Shaping our Future board member Mike Rewi assisted in promoting the survey to mana whenua. In total 67 people attended workshops, we met with 55 students and gathered 171 survey responses. The focus was to engage with rural Southland, capture the voices of mana whenua and the districts' youth.



*not your usual workshop*  
email [executive@shapingourfuture.org.nz](mailto:executive@shapingourfuture.org.nz) to book

	11AM	6PM
JULY 22	ATHOL HALL	LUMSDEN HALL
JULY 23	WYNDHAM HALL	WINTON RSA
JULY 24	STEWART IS PAVILLION	RIVERTON RSA
JULY 25	NIGHTCAPS HALL	TE ANAU DISTINCTION LUXMORE HOTEL

Shaping our Future workshop poster



Shaping our Future street engagement in Winton.

## Feedback on draft report

Our draft report was produced in late December 2022 and circulated to all who had participated in the engagement process.

In April 2023, we held public meetings in Winton, Riverton & Te Anau to capture feedback and comments on the draft report. We also met with Southland District Council staff to present the report and capture more feedback.

The public meetings to gather feedback were sparsely attended but provided some good output. The key points raised are below and where appropriate, the wording of relevant recommendations in the draft report have been amended to reflect the community feedback received.

- The aspirational vision was generally supported – broad enough so people could apply their own lens.
- Strong support for localism, decentralisation, use of tried and tested models, reducing bureaucracy and regulation.
- Suggestion that careers be developed for youth that lead to the provision of health care in communities.
- Include natural healing/alternative health with medical/healthland services.
- EV charging network should be paid for by the suppliers.
- Use library space for co-working hubs.
- Should the cost of seismic strengthening be left to property owners of empty high street premises?
- Concern around impacting existing property rights re second homes/ short term visitor accommodation.





## What the community said...

The biggest issues facing communities today.



A word cloud of community issues. The word 'government' is the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'misinformation', 'climate', 'change', 'infrastructure', 'cost', 'housing', 'health', 'progress', 'culture', 'isolation', 'pollution', 'employment', 'energy', 'societal', 'economy', 'monoculture', 'boring', 'tourism', 'staffing', 'connection', 'population', 'rascim', 'nothing', 'youth', 'costs', and 'costs'.

What success looks like to the community.



A word cloud of community success factors. The words 'community', 'thriving', 'connection', 'industry', 'wellbeing', 'investment', 'sustainability', 'independence', 'environment', 'leadership', 'diversity', 'opportunity', 'protection', 'education', 'youth', 'business', 'lifestyle', 'growth', 'infrastructure', 'safe', 'governance', 'facilities', 'independence', and 'innovation' are visible. 'community' and 'thriving' are among the largest words.

## What the community said...

What changes should be made today



What will have changed in order for Southland to be described as successful.



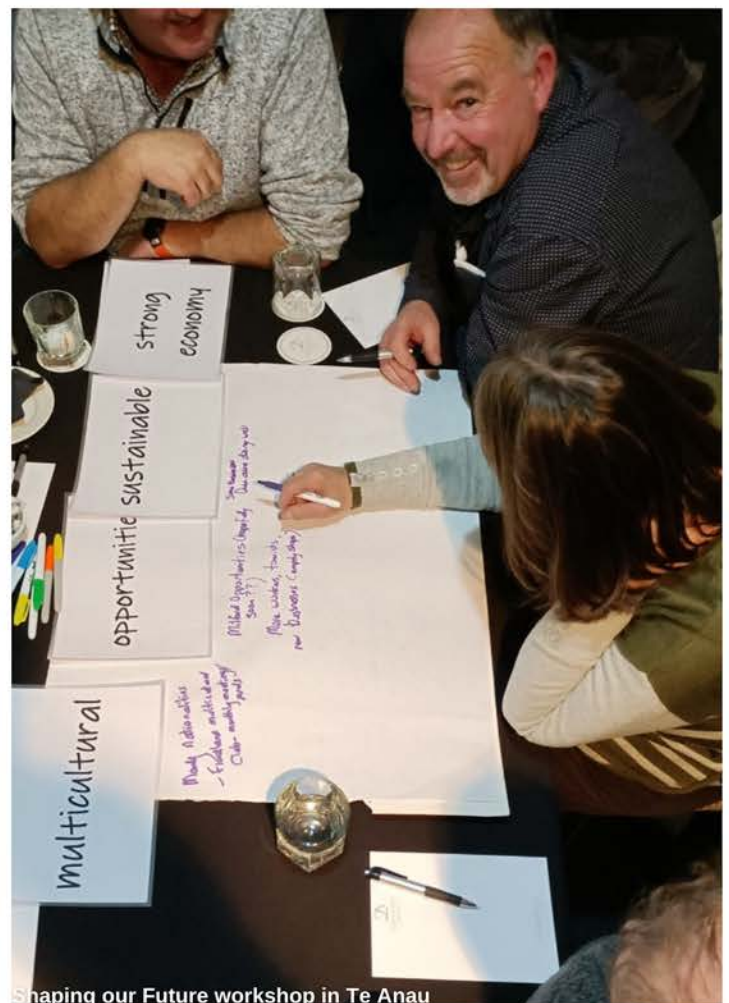
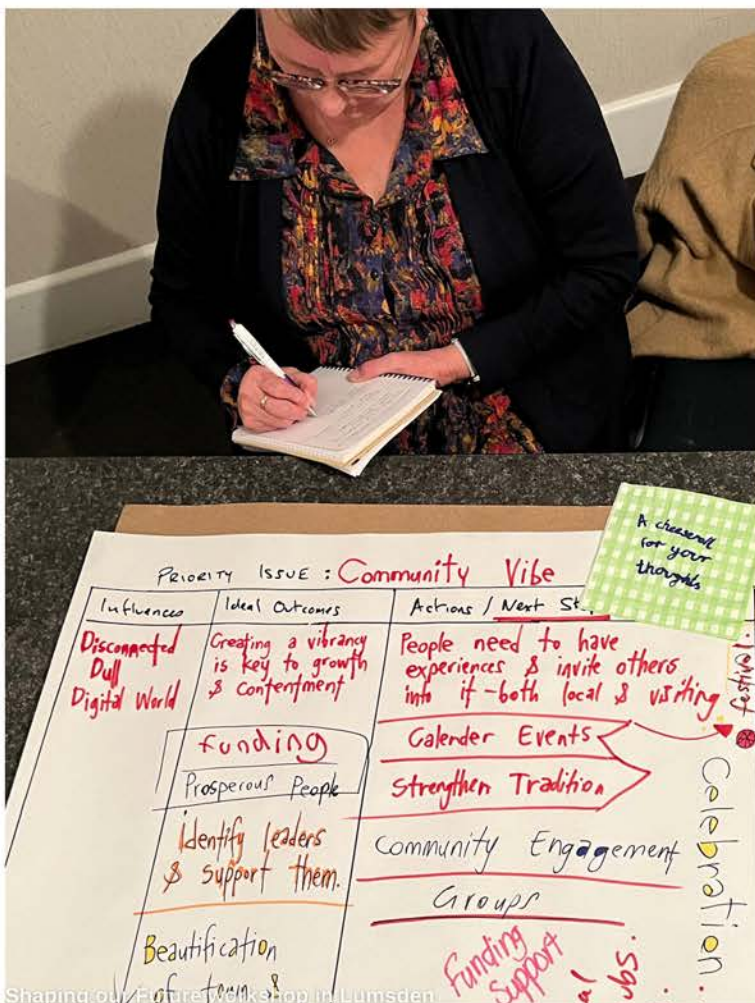


# A long-term aspirational vision for the Southland District



Feeding the nation,  
growing opportunity,  
preserving our past.

*"In 2042 Southland Murihiku will be applauded for how it feeds Aotearoa, will be acknowledged for the opportunities grown for its people and be admired for how it preserved the traditions and taonga that its community valued."*





## Whaikupu / Recommendations

We have collated what we heard from the community into a number of key topics. These are presented below along with the essence of community sentiment, words offered by the community and recommendations for action.

### Governance and regulation

We heard a lot of sentiment from community members who felt disenfranchised, over-regulated, controlled, and angry. A tangible sense of weariness arising from covid restrictions and environmental regulations that led to a lack of trust and reluctance to engage or stand for public office.

Transperincy  
&  
Trust - Truth

Shaping our Future workshop words - Riverton

COVID?

Shaping our Future workshop words - Stewart Island

The community aspires to: *'Localism, self-determination, empowered communities, community voices that are listened to, local solutions to nationwide issues. For Central and local Government not to lead with a stick. Consult and we will find a solution to achieve the why. The health system would be better supported, wellbeing would be at the forefront and sustainability would be of great importance.'*

STOP!  
3 Waters

Shaping our Future workshop words - Riverton

Southland  
Self Governed

Shaping our Future workshop words - Te Anau

We recommend...

1. Explore options that will give communities more decision-making power around aspects that they feel strongly about. There is a major opportunity to make this a central tenet of future Local Government reforms. Be a loud advocate for localism, decentralisation and reduction of bureaucracy.
2. Balance the benefits of utilising local contractors and service providers against the district wide contract model.
3. Collate, share, and celebrate local solutions or practices implemented to meet environmental standards.
4. Advocate for local 'alternative solutions' and tried and tested models that deliver required outcomes to be accepted.

## Aumangea / Resilience

Strong communities are resilient, and Southland has a tradition of tight, strong communities linked to its agricultural, mining, forestry, and manufacturing history. We heard the community express a sense of loss as the changing nature of work in the district and reduced local services brings fewer reasons for individuals to interact.

- Multi-faceted economy

Shaping our Future words - Lumsden

The community considers resilience to include: *'Local contractors, food sovereignty, energy security, clean water, local shops & services. Basic needs met within the community. Decentralised emergency response hubs. Waste to fuel plants. No more centralisations. Locals looking after locals.'*

 Stronger connectivity

Lack of Community Spirit

Shaping our Future words - Wynham

Shaping our Future words - Stewart Island



We recommend...

5. Review planning rules to reduce restrictions and consider rating policies that incentivise energy generation, food production and 'farmgate' sale of food.
6. Identify what would be required to bring more medical, alternative/ natural health and heartland services into the community.
7. Ensure local contractors are 'pre-approved' to act in the event of flooding /slips etc.
8. Encourage and support all communities to produce and implement a local 'calendar of events' that capture traditional events and mark the seasons for the differing communities living in the district.



Source: John Glover - Stewart Island Notice Board - an indication of a resilient community.

Funeling going to  
the right places  
Urban

How do  
you build  
'community'?

## Rāinga / Housing

Without exception, everywhere we visited is experiencing housing shortages. The lack of a place to live is causing a number of serious problems. The district cannot accommodate its growing population. Its children leave the area. Economic growth or diversification is stalled.

The key issues we were told about are: *'Affordability, availability, choices, second homes, zoning, lack of rentals.'*

Housing

- Inadequacy
- Cost of building
- Infrastructure
- Cost of housing

Shaping our Future words - Riverton

Absentee ratepayers.

Shaping our Future words - Lumsden



## We recommend...

9. A needs analysis is undertaken to identify what level of additional housing provision is required across the district – ie number and mix of stand-alone traditional dwellings, apartments etc and what is required by way of rental accommodation. The exercise should involve all sectors of the community.
10. Individual communities and settlements are asked to identify areas of land that they feel would be suitable for housing and plan changes are undertaken as required to enable this.
11. Public landowners (Councils, Linz, DOC etc) identify land under their stewardship/ownership that can be utilised for housing. This could involve affordable housing options where the land remains in the ownership of the public body.
12. Local councils consider rating/ development contribution policies that provide an incentive to or reduce barriers for those who are developing homes in the district including secondary units on their property.
13. Local councils consider planning/rating/development contribution policies that ensure businesses whose development creates demand for housing are contributing to the supply of housing either financially or by being required to construct new housing.
14. Restrictive planning policies are implemented, that apply to new homes, to prevent the short-term letting of whole homes.
15. Consider rating policies that penalise property owners where the property is not permanently occupied whilst acknowledging the rights of property owners to use their existing properties as they wish.

## Main Street Southland

The main street thoroughfares across the district are in varying states of health. The rise of online retail, retrenchment of banking and similar services and greater number of 'big box' stores has had a hard impact on traditional village stores and shops.

# Beautification

Shaping our Future words - Wyndham

Success for Main Street Southland is to be: *'Open for business. Beautify empty shops, streetscapes, planting, bring back businesses, other reasons to visit & connect, community events, traditions, festivals, recreation activities. Visiting medical / health services, space for childcare. Art, culture. Local weekly market days like those in France with cheaper, locally produced produce.'*

### We recommend...

16. Beautification programmes are implemented for all main streets in consultation with local communities.
17. Rating policies are developed to incentivise businesses moving into previously empty commercial premises on main streets.
18. Support is provided to the owners of vacant commercial premises to assist in painting/maintenance & seismic strengthening.
19. Explore what is required to enable empty premises to be utilised for co-working spaces, heartland services/ childcare / community arts.
20. Provide premises that are suitable for visiting health/alternative health services and local physiotherapists etc to work from.
21. Position playgrounds, skate parks and other recreational facilities in close proximity to main streets to provide other reasons to visit the area.



## Te ōhanga / The economy

We heard a strong desire for economic growth and prosperity. This poses a number of challenges assuming the current workforce remains in their current roles. With an average of only 3% unemployment, where will additional employees come from, and where will they live?



Shaping our Future words - Stewart Island

Basic needs

Shaping our Future workshop - Riverton

Economic aspirations are: *'need to provide for industrial/commercial/co working space. Where will workers & families live? Need net migration with very low unemployment. Apprenticeships, trade skills. Diversify away from mainstream ag - eg hops, hemp, crops, energy farming. Streamlined consenting processes. Intergenerational transfer of knowledge & skills. Become a base for the digital /remote workforce. Higher value opportunities in the tourism sector.'*

As stated above, the constraints on available accommodation pose the greatest challenge to economic growth. Without a place to live, the workforce is constrained.

Beyond resolving the accommodation issue,

We recommend...

22. Ensuring there is a good network of co-working spaces across the district.
23. The tourism sector work to identify learning & development opportunities for new entrants rather than just a focus on filling 'service' positions.
24. Continuing the work to identify high value, low environmental impact opportunities in the ag sector.
25. Identify opportunities to establish an ag sector education, research, innovation and tech campus in the district.

## Te taiao / The environment

As would be expected, Southlanders highly value their local environment and the opportunities it provides.

Not surprisingly we heard many views around the imposition of regulatory standards that in particular impact on the dairy sector. Some considered enforcement was necessary to raise standards, others felt peer groups would be best placed to work with poor performers.

There was no disagreement that waterways need to be protected, just about the best way to achieve this. Some felt levels of previous investment led to people being locked into an intensive land use model.

Success for the environment is that: *'soil is succulent, living, rich resource. Waterways returned to healthy state. Clean energy for Stewart Island, native birds flourishing. E-vehicle charging infrastructure provided'*

WATERS RUN CLEAN.

Shaping our Future words - Lumsden

### We recommend...

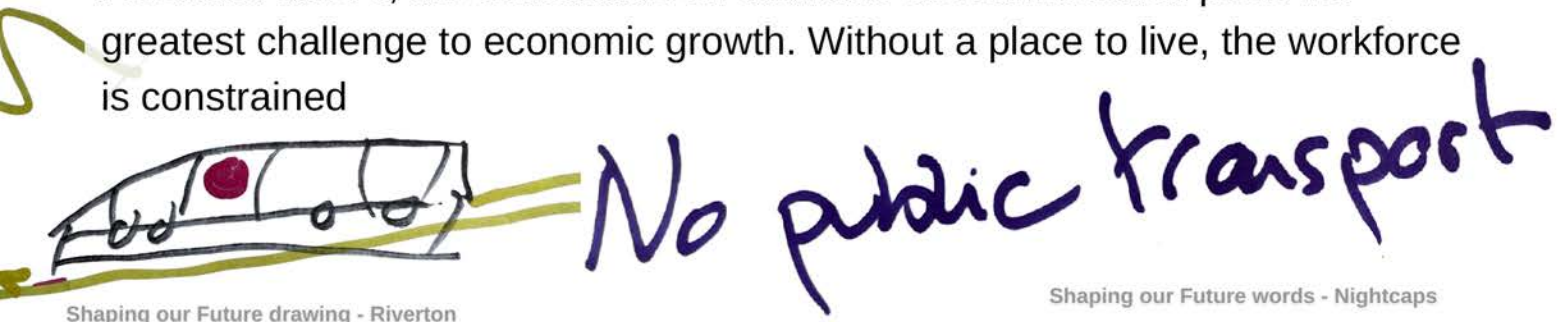
26. Leaders in the ag sector, regulators and rates setters consider how they can best support those who wish to move towards regenerative farming practices.
27. A scheme to support those who wish to exit from intensive dairy practices on or alongside vulnerable land is established.
28. Advocacy and support is provided at all levels towards providing a clean energy source for Stewart Island. Emissions aside, a fuel oil spillage is a foreseeable occurrence given the multimodal transport of the product. The environmental consequences of a spillage could be disastrous for the local environment.
29. Ensure a plan is in place for the provision of e-vehicle charging stations - paid for by suppliers -and that collaboration is undertaken between the various stakeholders necessary to deliver the plan.



## Transport

Southlanders are used to providing their own means of transport, but many felt public transport linking the main centres should exist and that on-demand community e-shuttle bus services would reduce some aspects of isolation and contribute to community resilience. If more services (eg driver licencing, medical) can visit the population centres, this will reduce the need to travel.

As stated above, the constraints on available accommodation pose the greatest challenge to economic growth. Without a place to live, the workforce is constrained



Long term success is: *'Transport service in to and between the centres - fit for purpose to access services. Re-use of track beds for cycle routes. Remove the prohibitive cost of transport from S Island to the mainland for medical etc appointments.'*

### We recommend...

30. Regional & Local councils collaborate to develop an aspirational public transport strategy for the region.
31. Local & regional councils look for opportunities to collaborate with tourism fleet operators to enable public use of these journeys.
32. Advocate for funds from the government's carbon reduction budget to support community shuttle bus services.
33. Options should be explored to significantly reduce the costs faced by Stewart Island residents when accessing health or other services on the mainland as it is in no-one's interest to have a dwindling permanent population. This would need discussions between the service provider, the Community Board, and a review of the purpose of the visitor levy.

## Māori respondents

18% of those who answered the ethnicity question on the survey identified as Māori.

The “biggest issues” mentioned were *Monocultured, Matauranga Māori, Racism.*

Success was described as *Partnership, culture, multicultural, integration,*  
Changes that could be made right now were *Stop the division of New Zealanders by race.*

*Te Reo Maori More opportunities for Rangatahi*



Te Tapu o Tāne - Nursery Open day

# Treaty Partnership

Shaping our Future words - Riverton

The long-term changes to create a successful Southland were:

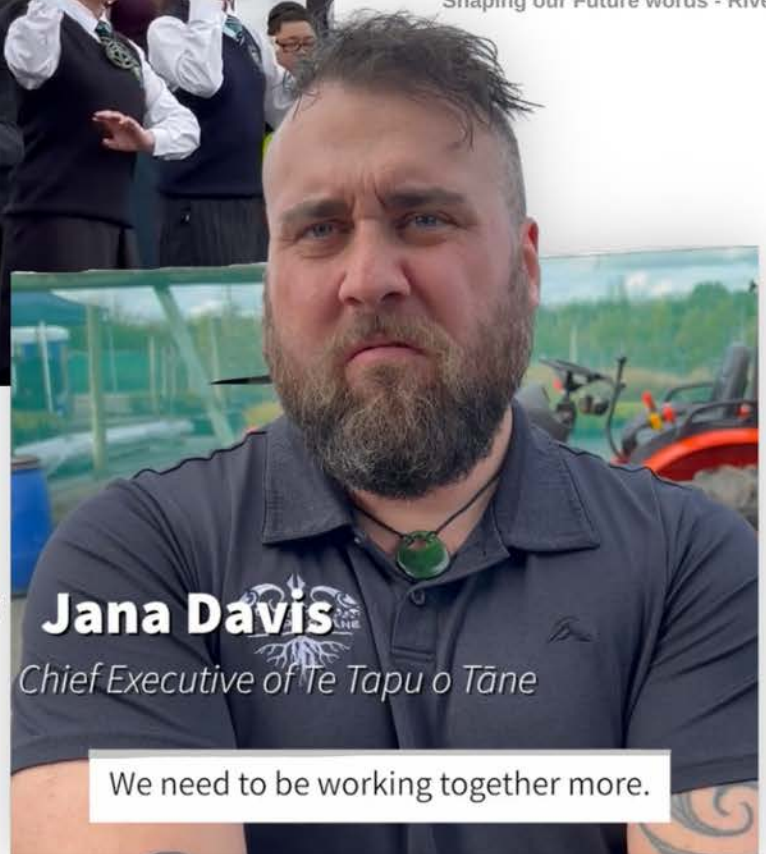
*'The whenua is healthy, providing a strong foundation upon which community wellbeing follows*

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/t/te-whare-tapa-wh%C4%81-and-wellbeing/>

*A council and province that values Mana Whenua input as a solution not a barrier*

*Cultural identity. Community centres. Passing of knowledge.*

*Less racism. Equitable society. Mana whenua Tangata whenua have a voice. Truly bicultural society.'*



**Jana Davis**

Chief Executive of Te Tapu o Tāne

We need to be working together more.



## Youth perspective

We visited Aparima & Fiordland colleges and met with year 10, 11, 12 & 13 students. We asked them to identify the best and worst things about their community, what they'd like to see there in the future and what would bring them back to live there in 30 years' time. Many of their issues and aspirations are addressed above, in particular provision of services locally, public transport, affordable housing. The strengths of growing up in small, supportive communities are offset by the isolation, restricted retail, and lack of privacy (everyone knows everything).

The best things were *'Beach, river, forests, friends, community, quiet, small school, lake environment, sense of safety, local police, national parks, walking trails, wildlife, events, great place to grow up.'*

The worst things were *'Small town, wind cold, limited shops, travel to school time, isolated, limited job opportunities, having to travel for everything, no local medical services, no public transport. It feels like we are just expected to live here and serve tourists and it's not a place for us.'*

Things to do  
all ages

Shaping our Future words - Riverton



Shaping our Future - Highschool engagement - Fiordland College

## Youth perspective cont.

Aspirations for the future included:  
*'Shops in particular food shops & restaurants, supermarkets, sports facilities, bike tracks, waterparks, ice rink, year-round pools, movie theatre, affordable housing, transport to Invercargill, local services eg driver licencing, better cell phone service, public transport, vineyards, cleaner looking.'*



→ jobs for kids

→ education that 'fits'

Shaping our Future words - Wyndham

What will bring them back: *'Safe small family, people, community, friends, cheaper housing Big Tourism job opportunities, safe community for family, more non-tourism jobs, family home, warmer weather.'*

## We recommend...

34. Employer/business development initiatives identify locally based meaningful career opportunities for new entrants to the workforce from the local communities - eg health sector.
35. Council parks & recreation work plans specifically identify improvements that reflect youth priorities. These can be determined via a Community Board led initiative.
36. Any initiatives to fill vacant retail premises should aim to attract some businesses that youth would like to see exist



## A selection of the words provided by the community

### What changes could be made right now?

Celebrate positive changes to industrial practices that better protect and, ideally, improve our environment. Fruit trees around community. More access to mental health resources.

Further encouragement for people to join smaller Southland communities and contribute to businesses so they remain open

Tidy up Winton. Enforce the property owner/s in the main street to improve the facades. Modernise it. Redesign the whole outdated Te Anau town centre Update district plan to meet community needs and invest in some long-term spatial town planning (more than zoning) More infrastructure for active and public transport

Ensure we are targeting and communicating productive and safe opportunities for our youth/Rangatahi. More activities for young families. More housing More day-care options.

Better storytelling and engagement with the community to try and instil pride back into our city and district

Clean rivers, more 'buzz', fresh ideas that would encourage young people ad families, Community space to share like Te Atamira in Queenstown. A place to create, cooperate, collaborate. More community art especially concerts and music

Get goods back on rail and a lot of the big trucks off the roads!

Environment Southland stops counting rabbits and stops charging us for counting rabbits because counting rabbits doesn't do anything.

## What would have changed over 30 years for Southland to be considered “successful”?

More trees, more people connected to open spaces, clean water

The community works together to create its own future.

Hopefully the trust, honesty, and respect that comes with small town communities has not faded but the quantity of people involved has increased.

Hopefully our beautiful little towns will survive and prosper

Population expansion will allow for our little towns that have all but died to thrive again

Far less pastoral farming and far more sustainable cropping for plant-based proteins and carbohydrates. Leading the world in sustainable Agriculture.

Opportunities other than farming

Additional \*new\* industries will be operating and continuing to provide workforce opportunities to grow our people and keep them in Southland.

Employment, new business and vitality

Maintain Southlands food production and make improvements on emissions as solutions become available.

Diversification of jobs and economy in Southland several new industries attracting a variety of people and cool projects to brighten the communities/town they are a part of.

Ensure we are targeting and communicating productive and safe opportunities for our youth/Rangatahi. More activities for young families. More housing  
More day-care options.

Better storytelling and engagement with the community to try and instil pride back into our city and district



## What would have changed over 30 years for Southland to be considered “successful”? cont.

The health system would be better supported, wellbeing would be at the forefront and sustainability would be of great importance. A higher population, meaning more opportunities for people in the region and attracting people to it. More diverse and larger population. High growth economy

A council and province that values Mana Whenua input as a solution not a barrier.

Families being able to only have one parent working. A lot of our problems are caused by parents not having the time to talk to their children.

Less racism. Equitable society. Mana whenua Tanga ta whenua have a voice. Truly bicultural society

More interesting shops. upgraded town centre.

Doors open in shops, people happy and incomes balanced and warm happy houses

All shops in the main street occupied and busy, increased tourism and more people staying local for work.

Developed town of Bluff, International travel direct from Invercargill, Passenger rail and a successful rugby team. Keeping our local Council, values, and promoting our innovative people

*To view more community feedback click [here](#) to watch our video.*

