



YOU, ME, WE, US KAIAPOI

Waimakariri District Council Social Recovery

This is our legacy programme, fostering community-led projects in earthquake-affected communities in Kaiapoi. We show that people and communities working together can make great things happen and we build partnerships between local businesses, grassroots community groups and residents.

We took over from Rubble Rousers, the Kaiapoi Gap Filler project that had for over two years created artworks on empty sections in the town's business area. Difficulties securing funding and volunteer overworking saw this come to an end, so we started this new platform to manage funding while involving many of the same people.

It's all about putting ideas into action. In October 2013 we invited locals to a conversation café where heaps of ideas for community-building and beautification initiatives were shared. A year on, over 15 of these have become a reality, some of which include the Harcourts Kaiapoi River Clean-up; giant toy boxes and community naughts and crosses boards (using repurposed road cones as markers) for the town centre; planting days to grow food forests; bottling, pickling and preserving workshops; the family-aimed Kaiapoi Adventure Race; and Kaiapoi Stands Tall - which saw five 1.3m-tall fibreglass giraffes decorated by local schools. Our steering group looks forward to helping deliver many more, particularly with businesses and sports and youth groups.

Two funds were created to support our work. One was to help groups and individuals respond to ideas from the conversation café, particularly community projects relating to the themes of enhancing natural environment, young people and youth space, arts and culture, businesses and economic development and community spaces and facilities. The other finances community events that build on community involvement, camaraderie and enjoyment. Funding comes from rates, the Canterbury Community Trust and a range of government agencies.

A lot has changed since the programme began. There is an increased sense of community in the area and more connectedness between residents. We have a platform for social innovations and creativity that signal hope and energy. We envisage a variety of existing groups such as Waimakariri Creative Arts Group and Kaiapoi Promotions Association taking ownership and discussions are under way between the District Council and Promotions Agency for an alliance to bring all local community groups together to work for the good of the town and its residents.

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