

Josh *for*
Mayor

Chartering our Course – *Whanganui 2050*

—
*A new generation
of leadership.*

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Being elected mayor and having the opportunity to lead the future of the district is a privilege. As a mayoral candidate it's important to articulate my blueprint for our future so that ratepayers and residents can understand what drives me and the type of district I want for Whanganui in 2050.

A Blueprint for our Future

In 2050, Whanganui is a district where people are happy and fulfilled, and where a hand up is extended to those in need. Our 65,000 residents feel proud of and confident in our district, they know that Whanganui can lay the foundations of success for their children and grandchildren, and that in old age they will be safe and feel socially connected here.

In 2050, the indigenous and European history of our district will be at the forefront of our identity. Boutique hotels are sustained by a thriving tourist economy, as people travel here from across the globe to visit our world-leading design and cultural institutions, and to immerse themselves in Te Awa Tupua interactive learning experiences.

Since 2025, the Whanganui CBD has had a further shot of adrenaline. Pristine heritage facades line the vibrant inner-city streets, overlooking public spaces laden with Māori and multicultural artworks, bespoke lighting by local artists, and interactive play features for children. A youth recreational hub offers a central venue for social activity to young people and late-night dining options are plentiful. Restaurants and pop-up food carts offer diverse cuisine for locals and visitors, with seating spilling out onto the wide pavements beneath the abundant native greenery. Hundreds of people now live in the CBD, with the dim glow from the sleek upper-level windows offering a nod to the modern apartment-living options available to residents, young professionals and retirees.

Water quality has improved significantly, with urban and rural cooperation contributing to our healthy and swimmable Awa Tupua. Each year thousands of national and international visitors travel from the mountains to the sea on the renowned Whanganui Cultural Trail, experiencing 600 years of human history along the Awa culminating at the Te Awa Tupua Cultural Centre, a leading educational and research institute, museum, and conference venue. The biennial Awa Festival attracts thousands, with flotilla, dance, kapa haka, opera, light shows, street food and picnicking on the banks of the Awa.

Meanwhile, our economy has diversified with advanced manufacturing delivering export growth and the development of the tech industry driving higher salaries and contributing to a net increase in household incomes. More people are working flexibly and a responsive education system means that people can adapt as technology changes. Higher household incomes mean people have more time to volunteer in the community and children see more of their parents.

Our airport unlocks the gateway to Te Waipounamu the South Island with regular flights coming in and out of Ōtautahi Christchurch. The pilot academy leads New Zealand in aviation education and has secured several more cadet programmes with international airlines across Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Similarly, a thriving marine precinct has emerged at the redeveloped port with several successful ancillary companies supporting Q-West and its global clientele. We've seen reliable job growth across several emerging marine companies and the port is now a satellite hub servicing South Taranaki's multibillion dollar offshore wind renewable energy sector.

Poverty rates have fallen over the last 25 years and our local community sector is well supported by government, council, and private philanthropy in delivering a helping hand to the most vulnerable. Social housing stock has grown, although demand is now lessening as more people are able to buy their own homes. Whanganui homes are warm and dry and human-centred design ensures accessibility for people with disabilities. New developments include shared spaces, and native trees populate the surrounding greenspace.

Suburbs are safe and neighbours are connected, with social hubs that enhance well-being and provide spaces for our diverse population. Modern systems ensure that new migrants, refugees and newcomers can access services and integrate easily. Rapid public transport is reliable and people of all income-levels use it regularly. App-controlled e-scooters and single-occupant transport pods are popular and provide alternatives to cycling which has also grown in popularity over the last quarter-century.

In 2050, Whanganui is a district that celebrates its past and embraces the future. 25 years of forward-planning, innovation and progressive thinking has positioned us at the forefront of success as we enter the second half of the 21st century. We've reduced poverty, people have higher incomes and a diversified economy provides social opportunity. We blend modern design with a celebration of heritage and we tell our indigenous and post-European settlement history proudly. We're a global district with multicultural arts, cuisine and events being a part of who we are. We've done well, and we enthusiastically look ahead towards an even more exciting future.