# Top Left - Logo: Ministry of Social Development | Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora Top right Logo: Te Korowai Whetū | Social Cohesion

# Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion guide

## What can we all do as communities to help?

### Belonging together

We all have a role to play in building social cohesion. That includes helping people feel like they belong, are included, can be themselves and take part in society. Most of us do this without even realising. Talking to our neighbours, volunteering, or attending a community event are all things that create a sense of belonging and participation. Even in our workplaces, we are likely doing things that build social cohesion through simple acts like having a coffee or lunch with a new colleague.

We create communities for many reasons, you might be part of a family, a school, a workplace, sports team, church, you might be learning a new language with others or share a hobby. Whatever community you are in, it feels good to belong, to feel included, to be yourself and be part of something.

We’re all different but we want to get along, celebrate our diversity and respect others when we disagree. This is important because not everybody feels that they can be who they are or trusts that their voice will be heard.

We are an increasingly diverse country with many different communities and we need to find ways to listen to each other and hear each other. We want to commit to understanding our differences and strengths and to work on what unifies us and what brings us closer.

### Belonging – what it looks like

In a society where people get along well, we know each other, know our neighbours, feel included in our workplace, our children feel part of our communities and we know where to go to get help when we need it. We feel that we are able to talk to people we might not normally talk to, speak up when we hear people saying discriminatory things, and feel free to share who we are, where we are from, and how we do things. In a crisis we leave no one behind – everyone is included.

### Building more belonging – what you can do

So, what can we do to help more people belong, embrace diversity, feel connected, take part, trust others and feel respected?

### Belonging together

* Identify and address discriminatory behaviour, policies and practices. For example, have a courageous conversation with someone who is displaying discriminatory behaviour. Resources on the Human Rights Commission website can be helpful, such as [Responding to Racism](https://www.hrc.co.nz/resources/responding-racism/) (<https://tinyurl.com/39by5rcp>)
* Help people and organisations get better. For example, seek out training in your organisation, local council or through an NGO on tackling discrimination and share what you’ve learned with friends, family and work colleagues.
* Talk to someone who is different than you. Make an effort to pronounce their name correctly. Find out what makes them tick, learn about how they see the world.
* Ask them to join your sports team, invite them to a shared activity, introduce them to your friends, help them with English, Te Reo Māori or New Zealand Sign Language, if they need it, and ask them to teach you more about the language or languages they know.
* Consider where legislative, regulatory, policy changes are needed to support anti-discrimination. For example, provide a submission on policies and legislation during public consultation.

### Embracing diversity, feeling respected

* Consider if, in your workplace or organisation, you can use, provide or apply for funding to design a programme or service to address discrimination.
* Build or support employee networks in your workplace where people can help each other and work to address issues like discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality and disability. Ask your workplace to make a commitment to diverse representation at all levels.
* Be whānau support for a colleague experiencing discrimination in the workforce or other communities.
* Seek out training through your workplace, council or community group on tackling discrimination.
* Write to your local councillor or Member of Parliament or make a submission to a government consultation, to call out discrimination issues.

### Feeling connected

* Provide leadership and co-develop and promote inclusive social norms. For example, you do not need to be a manager of a team to be a leader. You can display positive leadership by openly valuing the diverse contributions of your colleagues, friends and acquaintances. This can be through verbally acknowledging the person, giving them space and time to talk and listening to what they have to say.
* Continue to create opportunities for dialogue with diverse communities. For example, reach out to new neighbours and make new acquaintances with individuals from different communities. You may meet them at local events or online workshops and hui.
* Co-design policy with diverse community input. For example, if you are a policymaker, consider using resources on the [DPMPC Policy Project](https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/policy-project) website to develop a robust engagement plan.
* Promote understanding of other cultures and identities. For example, set up a Neighbours Day event in your local area such as a shared lunch or afternoon tea.
* Organise a community fair or neighbour’s day and invite representatives of all parts of the community to take part including children.
* Attend and show your support for community events organised by people who are different than you.
* Offer to host a vaccination clinic at a community hall, place of worship or other venue, during a pandemic.
* Host a local or national election debate between prospective councillors or MPs.
* Reach out to similar communities and see how you can help to achieve each other’s mutual aims.
* Open your marae, place of worship, mosque, church, club rooms to the community and let them know who you are so they can get to know you.

### Taking part

* Participate in diverse community activities and create strong, high-trust and ongoing relationships.
* Attend public community events and celebrations and seek out information on the events and celebrations. You can find community activities in your area using Neighbourly, EventFinda or your local newspaper.
* Become knowledgeable about NZ history and the Treaty of Waitangi and engage more with Te Reo me ngā tikanga Maori. For example, learn Te Reo using free online apps such as Kōrerorero, Kupu and Ako Tahi or sign up to a course through Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, visit the history exhibitions at your local museum, or borrow books on NZ history from your local library.
* Talk to community advisers about your ideas to bring more belonging into your community.
* Apply for funding from government agencies to fund your community project, start with funding sources such as [COGS](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/community-organisations-grants-scheme/) (<https://tinyurl.com/yp6rwrjp>) or [Lotteries](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/lottery-grants-board/) (<https://tinyurl.com/yv68ffkm>) through the grants management system or through the [Community-Led Development Programme](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/community-led-development-programme/) (<https://tinyurl.com/d4advfbc>). There will also be other funding available – ask for more information about options.

## Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion

Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion comes from the whakatauāki, “Whatua te korowai i ngā tini whetū”, meaning: “to weave the korowai (cloak) from the myriad stars.”

The name ‘Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion’ reflects the vision of social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand described in the social cohesion strategic framework, where we can support each other to thrive and shine bright like whetū or stars together.

### End of information: Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion guide | What can we all do as communities to help?