



Community Reference Group Workshop 1 – Summary

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The first Awakeri Community Reference Group (CRG) workshop was held on Wednesday 15 April and ran for three hours. The session was attended by 25 participants.

The workshop began with some live acoustic music, introductions, giving group members the opportunity to meet one another and share their connection

to Awakeri, and consider the prospect of what Awakeri might look like in 50 years' time. This helped set the tone for open, respectful discussion and the sharing of local knowledge and perspectives.

The workshop was structured around five key focus areas. Participants worked in small groups, rotating between tables to consider strengths, threats, opportunities and weaknesses for Awakeri from a local point of view.



Recreation and civic services

Discussions highlighted the importance of facilities that support daily life and community wellbeing. Topics included public toilets, accommodation options, an events centre, hot pools, walking and cycling connections, and the White Pine Bush walk. Participants also raised concerns about roading, pressure on land for services, and the impact of domestic animals on indigenous biodiversity. Strong support was expressed for the local school and the value of education facilities to the community.



Growth and new homes

Focus on where future housing demand may come from and interest in what types of housing might be built. Access to schools, shops, open spaces and community facilities was seen as critical to ensuring growth supports the existing community with a rural feel.



Transport and movement

A key area of concern, particularly safety around schools and State Highway crossings. Participants noted traffic congestion during school drop-off and pick-up times, the large number of children in the area, and the need for safer speeds through the settlement. The idea of a truck stop or transport hub was raised, along with the importance of clear gateways that reflect a strong sense of arrival, place and departure.



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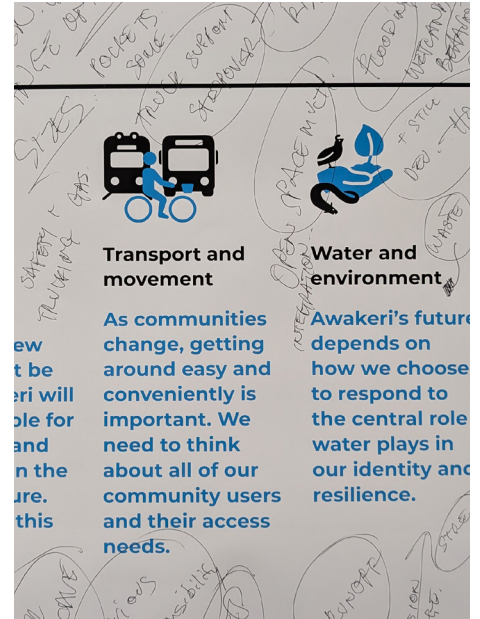
Water and environment

Conversations focused on flooding, erosion and sedimentation, and how waterways, drains and canals are managed and maintained. (Wetlands) Natural solutions were discussed as an important approach, along with drainage management and the integration of environmental spaces as Awakeri develops.



Identity of Awakeri

The identity of Awakeri was consistently highlighted as a strength. Participants spoke about the strong community feeling, the value of people and connections, the desire to retain a rural feel, and the importance of access to nature, including Latham's Hill tracks. These elements were seen as central to what makes Awakeri special.



Next steps

The workshop also generated wider questions and comments, including why Awakeri is being planned for now, what stakeholders are saying, and why details are still high-level at this stage.

Participants acknowledged that Awakeri has grown steadily over the past 100 years and is expected to continue growing into the future. Suggestions included the need for a supermarket, restaurants, public toilets, safer crossings and speed limits, and recognising the wider catchment — including streams, canals and roads — rather than focusing only on the village itself.

The idea of a central collective marae was also raised. This Community Reference Group is part of the early stages of developing the Awakeri Structure Plan. The focus at this point is on listening, sharing ideas and identifying key issues and opportunities. Detailed design work, such as where houses may go, what they might look like, and how infrastructure will be delivered, has not yet been completed and will be informed by technical studies and further community engagement as the project progresses.

The next workshop will take place in May to continue the conversation and build on what has been heard so far.

