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ROTORUA AND TAUPO

Registered Charity No: CC21560

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 11 am, Thursday, 22 February 2018

Checking Our Vital Signs® Report reflects Taupō's growing optimism

The results for the Geyser Community Foundation's Vital Signs® 2018 research project for the Taupo district along with a separate report for the Rotorua district were released today.

Geyser's Chair, Pat Brown said the reports show growing confidence in both districts across a range of sectors.

Vital Signs® is a research tool used to understand local residents' perceptions of the place they call home. The report looks at the social, environmental, cultural and economic well-being of our local communities, identifying strengths, and areas for improvement according to local people.

"This is the first time the research has been carried out in the Rotorua and Taupō district communities. It provides us with an independent understanding of our local communities' challenges and priorities, and will be refreshed every three years."

Mr Brown said these are exciting times for both districts but at the same time there are some significant challenges.

Commenting on results of the Taupō report, Mr Brown said we live in a beautiful part of the country so it's no surprise that the things we love most about living here are the natural environment, climate and air quality.

"Local residents believe we are performing best in the areas of sports, recreation, arts and culture."

The top five things we love about living here (in order) are:

- Natural environment, climate and air quality
- Recreation, parks and reserves
- Connectedness – friends, whanau, community, support
- Personal safety – feeling safe
- Walkability and cycling infrastructure

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GROWTH THROUGH GIVING

“In contrast, the areas the community think are being performed least well are reducing inequity, housing, supporting young adults and ensuring the Taupō district is a safe place for all residents to live (as distinct from residents feeling safe themselves). The main priorities for improving safety are addressing alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence and child abuse.”

Mr Brown said the population of Taupō district is growing, leading to concerns about employment availability, and increases in housing and rent prices.

“Residents are also thinking about what further growth means for the area and for the environment, and how to best plan for that growth. At the same time, social issues, such as drug abuse, continue to impact communities in the district.”

The five biggest issues facing the Taupō district (in order) are:

- Availability of jobs
- Planning for the region’s growth
- Cost of living
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Caring for the environment

Vital Signs® 2018 for the Taupō and Rotorua districts is a collaborative project between the Geyser Community Foundation, BayTrust, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Taupō District Council.

The Bay-wide survey was conducted by Key Research.

First started by the Toronto Foundation in Canada in 2001, Vital Signs® is now a global programme led by the Community Foundations of Canada that has engaged communities around the world to mobilise the power of community knowledge for greater local impact.

Copies of the full Vital Signs® 2018 reports for both the Taupō and Rotorua Districts are available on Geyser’s website www.geysercf.org.nz

Ends

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