

Auckland Citizens Advice Bureaux Incorporated

Summary of Budget Submission to Auckland Council on the Draft Long-Term Plan 2018–2028 and the Auckland Plan



The first three pages of Auckland Citizens Advice Bureaux submission to Auckland Council on the Draft Long Term Plan 2018 – 2028 and the Auckland Plan provides a summary of the document. The substantive submission commences on page four.

The Auckland Plan offers a thirty-year strategy for the city with a focus on how it will grow. Of the six outcome areas in the Plan Auckland Citizens Advice Bureaux (ACABx) have a specific interest in the following topics.

- Belonging and participation
- Maori identity and wellbeing
- Homes and places
- Opportunity and prosperity

ACABx are supportive of the main thrust of the Plan and as a public service providing free access to advice and information, are de facto part of its implementation.

The Long-Term Plan 2018–2028 provides information about Auckland’s growth. It describes a scenario that a population the size of the city of Tauranga will be added every three years, to reach two million people by 2028. ACABx have a significant involvement in this aspect namely how an increasing population will be supported by local Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB).

The Long-Term Plan highlights three significant challenges facing Auckland of which two are highly relevant to the work of ACABx.

1. *Population growth that is outstripping the ability to provide enough housing and the infrastructure that supports that growth (transport, water, wastewater, libraries, parks etc.).*
2. *Inequalities across different communities meaning people do not share equally in the benefits of our increasing prosperity.*

ACABx considers that there is a fourth challenge created by growth – that is pressures placed on Auckland’s social infrastructure. This is as important as the Plan proposals to invest in physical infrastructure. Houses can be built, water supplied, waste removed and access to transport created but these alone do not create communities. As the Auckland Plan highlights, people flourish in areas with social amenities and facilities.

The Auckland Citizens Advice Bureaux (ACABx) oversees 32 bureaux providing advisory services to more than 300,000 Aucklanders a year across the region.

We help people to know and understand their rights and obligations and how to use this information to get the best outcomes, provide people with the confidence and support they need to take action, and work for positive social change within communities and wider society. It is a free and independent service to all.

We are, by any measures, an exceptionally lean and efficient organisation. We are volunteer-based, and we rely wholly on the goodwill of our volunteers to provide services to Aucklanders in need. Our volunteers provide a necessary service which could not be replicated without vastly increased spending.

While Auckland's population has grown significantly over the past decade, funding for CAB services by Auckland Council has been frozen, in real terms, since the formation of Auckland Council in November 2010. Whilst there are annual CPI top-ups, the rate of growth of client enquiries through this period has averaged 5% per annum. This means that 7 years after the freeze was instituted, we are seeing 41% on the same funding. We are now doing much more for less.

Notwithstanding how stretched our services are, we are seen as a very reliable and trusted service provider in the community. Our services are hugely valued within the communities we operate. The people we assist are overwhelmingly from low income households and who cannot afford to pay for the advice and services we provide at no cost.

As a volunteer-based service provider, we rely on our volunteers' goodwill. We are asking Auckland Council for a \$200,000 budget increase. We have had no funding increase for the last seven years, yet we are now seeing over 40 percent more people than we were seven years ago. Given the level of service we provide, this is a miniscule request.

As the city's population grows public services such as CABx also need to increase to meet the social infrastructure needs of Auckland. To achieve this additional resources are required, which cannot be provided within the current financial envelope.

Budget Request

To meet the growth ACAB is seeking at least an additional \$201,000 per annum from Auckland Council. This would increase the current Long-Term Plan allocation to a minimum \$2,039,307 plus continuation of the annual CPI adjustment.

Page three onwards provides the full submission to Auckland Council and sets out a number of outcomes, which ACABx considers necessary to continue providing Auckland's growing population with free advice and information.

The cost to achieve the three critical outcomes is as follows.

	Minimum	Target
Adding value to existing centres of population	\$ 28,000	\$ 36,000
Extend the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux	\$ 80,000	\$ 149,000
Continue to provide services through 32 sites	\$ 93,000	\$ 95,000
Additional Funding Total	\$ 201,000	\$ 280,000

The following pages set out how ACABx can respond to growth with the support of Auckland Council. This will help continue to enhance Auckland’s social infrastructure and provide additional services to current and new communities. It also provides additional feedback on the Auckland Plan and Long-Term Plan 2018–2028.



1. Purpose

The purpose of this submission is to describe how Auckland’s Citizens Advice Bureaux can help achieve the objectives and outcomes of Auckland Council’s Draft Long Term Plan 2018–2028 and also the Auckland Plan.

Auckland Citizens Advice Bureaux (ACABx), have an enduring partnership with Auckland local government, which has been in place since the 1970’s. Through these partnerships many communities, whanau, family and individuals have received free advice, support and assistance. This has helped and continues to create the social fabric Auckland needs to be a world class city. With additional support, ACABx can respond to population growth, the formation of new communities, meet increases in demand and at the same time extend services to more people living and working in Auckland.

ACABx seeks to secure additional funding from Auckland Council to enable the organisation to:

- a. Add value to existing centres of population through extending reach, exploring new models of delivering and offering advice and increasing awareness and take up of the services.
- b. Continue to provide services through 32 sites which have been used in 2016/17 by 301,246 (excludes Justice of the Peace Clinics).
- c. Extend the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux to areas currently identified as requiring services and those being developed to meet the need of a growing population.
- d. Support governance, reporting of information and analysis to inform decision making.

Strengthening the above four areas will enable ACABx to support Auckland Councils intentions and objectives for CAB services, and Auckland as a whole.

To achieve the four outcomes, ACABx is seeking *at least* an additional \$201,000 from Auckland Council. This would build on the current Long-Term Plan allocation in 2017/2018 of \$1,838,606.

2. Summary

ACABx and Auckland Council have symbiotic relationship, which is mutually beneficial. It has served many who live and work in Auckland. As the city’s population grows ACABx needs additional resources to catch up with growing demand.

The allocation of the additional funds requested is as follows:

	Minimum	Target
Adding value to existing centres of population	\$ 28,000	\$ 36,000
Extend the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux	\$ 80,000	\$ 149,000
Continue to provide services through 32 sites	\$ 93,000	\$ 95,000
Additional Funding Total	\$ 201,000	\$ 280,000

The “Target” amount indicates the funds required to fully implement the ACABx plan to meet the region’s growing needs.

This submission **excludes** the cost of resources required to fund ACABx to carry out the initiatives resulting from the recent Review of Local Board Services.

3. Citizens Advice Bureaux

Aims and structure

Citizens Advice Bureaux are a volunteer service, open to all providing free advice, information and guidance to enable people to make decisions on matters that affect their lives and wellbeing. The aims of the organisation are to:

- Ensure that individuals are not adversely impacted through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities, or of the services available, or through an inability to express their views and needs effectively.
- Influence the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally which impact on the population served.

The Citizens Advice Bureau collects data from serving individuals, whanau and family, and uses this aggregated information to advocate for improved policies and services in Auckland and Aotearoa.

Each Bureau is an incorporated not for profit organisation, operated by local community volunteers. Each Bureau has a Board of elected volunteers who plan, govern and promote their CAB. In Auckland there are 11 Bureaux, who operate 32 service sites with 36 part-time staff, supporting 1,200 volunteers.

People who use CAB services in Auckland

Almost one in five Aucklanders use CAB services each year. This includes whanau, new migrants, homeless seeking emergency shelter, beneficiaries, young people starting out in life and retirees.

Public service, access and funding

Prior to 2010 and the reorganisation of local government in Auckland ACABx were supported by the legacy councils. These councils had a variety of arrangements in place with CABs, allocating them funding and in-kind costs such as subsidised or free accommodation.

In 2017/18 funding from Auckland Council to ACABx was \$1.838 million. In real terms since the formation of Auckland Council in 2010 the allocation through the Long-Term Plan to ACABx has remained static. The only increase has been through the annual Consumer Price Index adjustments. The following table shows the CPI adjustment since 2013/14. (ACABX Annual Report 2016 -2017)

2013/14	2.4%
2014/15	2.5%
2015/16	2.4%
2016/17	0.79%

Whilst funding has been on a seven year plateau the number of people accessing CAB services in Auckland has steadily increased. ACAB is servicing 41% more people than seven years ago for the same real funding amount. Each year ACABx and its members have struggled to absorb the growth. Continuing with the funding cap is not a viable option as the point has been reached where it is increasingly problematic for existing services to meet current demand and the potential to grow or extended reach and access into communities. It also is stopping the organisation establish new Bureaux, or where appropriate, satellite services.

4. Maintaining and extending services, increasing access and supporting governance

ACABx wish to build on the long-term partnership with Auckland Council. The Draft Long Term Plan 2018-2028 and Auckland Plan set out challenges confronting Auckland and opportunities to create a better place to live. ACABx are part of Auckland social fabric, which in turn contributes to the area's economic and social progress and as such already plays a role in helping achieve outcomes for the city. This role can be extended through the Long-Term Plan by providing additional support to that already being received from Auckland Council.

Outcome A: Adding value to existing centres of population

Awareness of the CAB service is high at 92% of the population (2013 Residents Survey Auckland Council). The uptake of services offered is around 19% of the population annually. Whilst face to face enquires increase each year by over 5%, it is clear that greater penetration into communities would serve to increase the number of people using CAB. The funding from

Auckland Council does not allow ACABx to actively promote services beyond signage, letterbox drops and local posters undertaken by local Bureaux.

There are a number of initiatives, which would improve reach into and access by individuals to CAB.

1. The current funding model does not allow or enhance CAB testing out and exploring different models to improve access. Existing Bureaux could run satellites at locations used by specific groups. This would be particularly useful for Bureaux covering large geographical areas and populations. The range of locations for satellites would be informed by local knowledge and analysis of data and could include Marae, Early Childhood Education Centres, and Retirement villages. Satellite centres would be located in discussion with local boards and current Bureaux user data. Maximising technology to engage younger people is another initiative to be considered.
2. Partnering with Auckland Council through using their media communications with Aucklanders. Occasionally publications such as Our Auckland could highlight CAB and the services offered similar to coverage of Water Safety and Waste Minimisation. It is also a way of Auckland Council showing how ratepayer's money is used in diverse ways to improve the wellbeing of individuals, whanau, and communities. The cost of highlighting CAB services in this manner would be marginal and add value to both organisations. Auckland Council could also use internal mailings to staff to highlight the work of ACABx similar to the support for "Movember".
3. Auckland wide campaigns to promote CAB's profile, would show how the services offered are more relevant than ever when there are increasing housing, financial and social pressures. These programmes would communicate the relevance of CAB services and increase service reach to a greater proportion of Auckland population.

Outcome B: Continue to provide services through 32 sites

ACABx and member Bureaux have absorbed the growth in people using services within the financial envelope provided by Auckland Council. With the next Long-Term Plan for 2018 -2028 being formulated ACABx is seeking a real increase to the previous financial support.

At present AC funding is on average \$58,000 per local Bureau in Auckland. The average cost is provided as legacy council funding models created variations between sites. For example; three Outer Auckland sites are funded on average \$42,000 each, CAB Waitakere with five sites funded on average \$57,883 per site whereas North Shore with five sites on average \$59,876 rising in the South with seven sites to \$72,614 a Bureau. Across Auckland there are over 1,200 volunteers working in Bureaux, speaking 25 different languages and providing advice and assistance to 19% of the population. There is also a desire, a need and a vision for the future to provide the organisation's service to more people.

Population growth is a central feature in the Draft Long-Term Plan 2018 - 2028 and Auckland Plan. It is an issue confronting all public services and is one that all estimates and indicators identify as increasing. It has an impact on the environment, the amount of waste produced, the provision of housing, jobs and transport. Growth also adds a pressure to the fabric of communities and the individual's and whanau who make up the population

For example; over the past decade the median house price in Auckland rose 95% while average weekly incomes grew by just over 30% and CPI inflation ran at 20%. This in turn, has meant that rents are also increasing faster than incomes. Rents across New Zealand have risen by 15% to 20% between 2013 and 2017. There is a rental housing shortage, and a growing number seeking emergency housing assistance from the Ministry of Social Development.

The numbers of people receiving either New Zealand Superannuation or a Veteran's Pension has grown by almost 700 per week for the past five years and reached almost 750,000 in December 2017. Such growth is predictable and will most likely continue at this or a similar rate for the next 10 to 15 years.

In 2016, The Salvation Army distributed 56,500 food parcels to 29,500 families or households. During 2017, the number of food parcels offered increased to almost 63,000, a 12% increase. These parcels were provided to 31,900 families or households with 47,300 children (Salvation Army – State of the Nation Report 2017). In Auckland the City Mission provided 13,714 food parcels last year.

These are just some examples of current social impacts on individuals and whanau of whom a significant percentage seek advice from CAB's. The Bureaux provide a key social safety net and are now under significant pressure due to growth. There are limits to the organisations ability to continue absorbing growth and costs and at the same time deliver high annual productivity. Whilst services at Bureaux can be uplifted through the recruitment and training of additional volunteers there becomes a tipping point in managing the workforce. There are 36 part-time employees who manage this workforce.

ACABx and member Bureaux are of the view reached through their experience and knowledge that the limit to continue absorbing growth has been reached and to maintain high quality advice services through the existing network requires additional funding. Based on a 5% per annum growth in people using Bureaux services it is recommended that the Long-Term Plan 2018 to 2028 provides for a similar amount of additional funding across 32 local Bureaux. This would equate to \$2,900 per site (based on \$58,000) a total of \$92,800 per annum from July 2018.

It is recognised and acknowledged that Auckland Council provides additional funding in kind through the provision of subsidised and free accommodation maintained by Auckland Council for Bureaux. It is anticipated that the Head Lease for these premises is held by ACABx. These associated costs would require additional funding.

Outcome C: Extend the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux

The Auckland Plans section on Belonging and Participation seeks to achieve an Auckland where all people will be part of and contribute to society, access opportunities, and have the chance to develop to their full potential. These are objectives which ACABx wishes to see realised and be an active partner in helping achieve. The more people that live in vibrant, well connected communities with the necessary physical and social infrastructure the greater is their opportunities to participate and contribute to both their own and the future of Auckland.

ACABx wishes to extend the network of local Bureaux not only predicated on the organisations own experience but also that evidenced as the main theme throughout the Draft Long-Term Plan 2018 - 2028 and Auckland Plan which is one of growth. It is seen as a major challenge for the city with population growth estimated to be 2.4 million by 2043. If such growth takes place the Auckland Plan suggest this could mean 320,000 more dwellings and 270,000 jobs.

The Development Strategy within the Auckland Plan pays particular attention to future growth areas. The Auckland Unitary Plan identifies areas already zoned as urban and the Future Urban Land Supply Strategy describes the approach for providing infrastructure.

The centres identified in the Auckland Plan range from Warkworth to Pukekohe and are seen as areas where maximising investment can be achieved by creating higher density clusters of employment and housing, supported by public transport and other critical services. The Strategy goes onto say the areas need to be vibrant places for the new communities who will live there. This requires a network of strong centres and neighbourhoods, integrated with good transport choices, and supported by a wide range of housing types and densities. These areas will also require employment other than that provided in centres, and services such as schools and hospitals, and amenities such as parks, sports fields and community facilities.

The Development Strategy describes a range of areas critical to supporting growth amongst which is the acknowledgement that centres are at the heart of neighbourhoods and are focal points for the surrounding community. They include a mix of activities and functions, such as retail, commercial and social services, as well as housing, recreation and community facilities.

The Auckland Plan also introduces the proposal of Multi Nodal Centre in Albany, Westgate, and Manukau rather than a single focus on the CBD. Increasing business growth and employment opportunities around Albany, Westgate and Manukau will help address several of Auckland's current transport and employment challenges. As these areas grow, there will be more options for people to work or study closer to home, and for greater benefits from business clustering.

The Draft Long Term Plan and Auckland Plan both provide evidence of the need to increase the number of CAB sites as they form part of the fabric of Thriving Communities. In each area of growth ideally there should be a Bureau or at least a satellite from an existing site. Just as there would be planning for schools, recreation and libraries, transport hubs, medical and social services the provision of a CAB should be included in these plans.

In 2011 a report to the 21 local boards entitled Auckland Council and Auckland Citizens Advice Bureaux Relationship stated that at least seven new potential CAB locations have been identified along with potential rationalisation of some services. There are opportunities for future developments to respond innovatively to changing demographics and increasing diversity of communities. Increased availability and accessibility of services to targeted populations with limited mobility is also needed. None of which is possible within current capped funding.

If funding does not allow for new CABx to be established significant members of Auckland population will be denied access. If the formula is that to open a new Bureau one must close a Bureau this ignores the public service nature of CAB. It is clear from ACABx experience and information collated by Auckland Council that three new or satellite Bureaux are required in each of the next three years. To pilot these would cost at least \$40,000 each with an average annual operational cost of up to \$60,900.

Outcome D: Governance, reporting, information and analysis

On 5 April 2012 Auckland Council Regional Development and Operations Committee approved in principle an increase in the amount of funding provided to CAB in Auckland of \$125,000, for the 2012/13 year only, to enable establishment of the Auckland CAB entity. Since this allocation of funding ceased in 2014/15 ACABx has been funded by a levy on member Bureaux which in 2015/16 was \$50,162, in 2016/17 was \$35,941 and in 2017/18 amounted to \$36,229.

Having to levy member Bureaux at 2% of the funding grant from Auckland Council this year has reduced operational funds available locally at all sites. If this was removed and support costs for ACABx reinstated, this funding would be released back to local services.

The Board members of ACABx are drawn from member Bureaux are voluntary and receive no payment. The governance structure, board meetings decisions and communications, information analysis and administration are all undertaken by one part-time twenty hours a week employee. Acting as the Head Lease holder for premises accommodating local Bureaux creates a further burden of administration. Meeting the reporting and other Auckland Council demands places a heavy burden on ACABx.

To undertake essential activities such as annual audit, Annual General Meetings, travel and meeting costs accounts for approximately \$8,000. The cost of part time staff support is \$31,000. To enable paid staff to work on joint projects with Auckland, ACABx request that through the Draft Long-Term Plan 2018–2028 that Auckland Council reassess the requirement of a grant to support ACABx in line with that provided in 2012/13.

Conclusion of Submission

ACABx request a real increase in funding support for the first time in seven years to catch up with service demand which arises from Auckland's growth.