

Attachment B: Letter to Mayor and Councillors



Thursday, 30 May 2018

Auckland Council
Private Bag 92300
Victoria Street West
Auckland

Dear Mayor and Councillors

Citizens Advice Bureau Funding

On behalf of the Citizens Advice Bureau in the Auckland region, ACABx made a budget submission to Auckland Council's Long Term Plan requesting additional funding for our services.

During the December Environment and Community Committee, Councillor Ross Clow invited us to make this submission, which we duly did. Unfortunately, we were not subsequently invited to one of the regional stakeholder workshops with the Finance and Performance Committee.

The reasons for our funding request are twofold. Both are aimed at making our service more accessible to the inhabitants of Auckland and will not happen without further funding.

Firstly, we need increased funding to enable more points of service in the Auckland area. Assessing this need is part of our 2018/2019 work programme. It could result in new bureaux, agencies or satellite services. The latter are particularly important for rural areas such as Franklin and Rodney, where population density is low. Without further funding, if additional outlets are required, existing bureaux would need to be closed.

Secondly there is a need to publicise our service. Many potential clients are losing out on their rights as they do not understand the depth and breadth of our service.

Unfortunately, we understand our request for a baseline funding increase of \$200,000 has not been included in the Council's LTP currently under consideration. This is exceptionally disappointing.

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.

This means that seven years after the funding cap was instigated we are servicing 41% more people than we were seven years ago for the same real funding amount. Each year ACABx and its members have struggled to absorb that growth. Continuing with the funding cap is no longer 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, satellites.

Auckland Citizens Advice Bureaux Inc. (ACABx)

PO Box 26123, Epsom, Auckland

Telephone - 09 631 7212 | Email – admin@acabx.org.nz

We are, by any measures, an exceptionally lean and efficient organisation and serve as an example to others. 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.

Our baseline funding request should not be contingent on the discussions we and Council are having over a shift to a new funding model. That discussion has been extended, and will continue through this year. It is a separate issue relating to how the funding is allocated. The problem we face right now is that the funding we receive is inadequate. It has been frozen in real terms, and significantly lower in terms of funding for service provision, than what we received seven years ago.

We are seen as a very reliable and trusted service provider in the community and 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. They are who will benefit from this funding request.

We hope that you will look favourably on our submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Diane Taylor
Chairperson, ACABx