

Submission to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

In the matter of the

**Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy –
Proposed Outcomes Framework**

Auckland Council, December - 2018



Mihimihi

Ka mihi ake ai ki ngā maunga here kōrero,
ki ngā pari whakarongo tai,
ki ngā awa tuku kiri o ōna manawhenua,
ōna mana ā-iwi taketake mai, tauiwi atu.
Tāmaki – makau a te rau, murau a te tini, wenerau
a te mano.
Kāhore tō rite i te ao.

*I greet the mountains, repository of all that has been
said of this place,
there I greet the cliffs that have heard the ebb and
flow of the tides of time,
and the rivers that cleansed the forebears of all who
came those born of this land
and the newcomers among us all.
Auckland – beloved of hundreds, famed among the
multitude, envy of thousands.
You are unique in the world.*

Taitara/ Title: Submission on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy - Proposed Outcomes Framework

This submission is to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Executive Summary

1. This submission is from Auckland Council (the council) and has been approved by the Chair of the Environment and Community Committee.
2. The council is in overall support of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy - Proposed Outcomes Framework (the Framework), vision, domains and focus areas, and supports the focus on wellbeing as an ambitious and comprehensive agenda.
3. Auckland Council has a strong interest in the wellbeing of children and young people, because there are more than half a million young people and children in Auckland, representing over a third of all children and young people in New Zealand. A third of Auckland's children and young people live in areas of socio-economic deprivation.
4. The proposed outcomes framework aligns well to the council's vision for Auckland's children and young people, as set out in the Auckland Plan 2050 and *I am Auckland* - the council's strategic action plan for children and young people.
5. The council recommends that the Framework:
 - i. strengthen the focus on Māori, by including it as a stand-alone outcome domain
 - ii. places greater focus on reducing inequities across all outcome areas, by substantially improving the situation of those most disadvantaged
 - iii. could enhance the emphasis on the importance of creativity and innovation, access to arts and culture and the role of sport and recreation
 - iv. needs to provide more focus on housing affordability, physical and emotional safety and security
 - v. considers the explicit importance of mental health as a determinant of child and youth wellbeing
 - vi. highlights the need for accessible, affordable, and active transport, as a key enabler to children and young people's participation and inclusion
 - vii. needs to focus on adults' role to care and protect the environment, so that our children can enjoy a healthy environment and a sustainable future
 - viii. puts a greater focus on harm reduction relating to access of alcohol, drugs and gambling by providing stronger regulations, as well as adolescent appropriate treatment addiction and mental health services
 - ix. is underpinned by a comprehensive and well-resourced action plan and evaluation framework, with adequate funding for services at the local level
 - x. provides for a more collective approach between government agencies, local government and communities to achieving sustainable solutions and outcomes.
6. We welcome an opportunity to participate and facilitate dialogue with the children and youth in Auckland on this in the future.

Whakataki/ Introduction

7. This submission is from Auckland Council (the council) and has been approved by the Chair of the Environment and Community Committee.

Tūnga whānui/ Overall Position

8. The council is in overall support of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy - Proposed Outcomes Framework (the Framework), vision, domains and focus areas, and its intent. We support the government's aspirational approach to ensuring all New Zealand children and young people have a happy, safe and secure future.
9. Auckland Council has a strong interest in the wellbeing of children and young people because:
 - i. there are more than half a million young people and children in Auckland, over a third (36 per cent in 2013) of all children and young people in New Zealand, representing a significant contribution to New Zealand's futureⁱ
 - ii. a third of Auckland's children and young people live in areas of socio-economic deprivation¹ and areas with prevalent child povertyⁱⁱ
 - iii. Auckland has the highest number of Māori and Pacific Island children and young people, a disproportionate number of whom currently experience substantial disparities in social outcomesⁱⁱⁱ
 - iv. children and young people are the future of our communities and cities. Ensuring children and young people feel safe, are cared for and are equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and opportunities to live happy and productive lives, will support better outcomes for all Aucklanders and for New Zealand.
10. The proposed outcomes framework aligns well to the council's vision for Auckland's children and young people, as set out in the Auckland Plan 2050 and *I am Auckland* - the council's strategic action plan for children and young people.
11. The Framework aligns with the outcomes of the Auckland Plan 2050, particularly:
 - i. Belonging and participation: All Aucklanders will be part of and contribute to society, access opportunities, and have the chance to develop to their full potential
 - ii. Homes and places: Aucklanders live in secure, healthy, and affordable homes, and have access to a range of inclusive public places
 - iii. Opportunity and prosperity: Auckland is prosperous with many opportunities and delivers a better standard of living for everyone

¹ The Social Deprivation Index is a measure of socio-economic status calculated for small geographic areas. The calculation uses a range of variables from the 2013 Census which represent nine dimensions of socio-economic disadvantage to create a summary deprivation score.

12. *I am Auckland* - sets out Auckland Council's commitment to help children and young people reach their full potential. Its outcomes areas are:

- Goal 1: I have a Voice, am valued and contribute
- Goal 2: I am important, belong am cared about and feel safe
- Goal 3: I am happy, healthy and thriving
- Goal 4: I am given opportunities to succeed and to have a fair go
- Goal 5: I can get around and get connected
- Goal 6: Auckland is my playground
- Goal 7: Rangatahi Tu Rangatira (all rangatahi will thrive)

Tūtohunga/ Recommendations

13. The council recommends that the Framework:
- i. strengthen the focus on Māori, by including a stand-alone outcome domain in the Framework. This would recognise the special obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi and the need to address as a matter of urgency the inequities and ongoing socio-economic disparities Māori children and their whānau experience
 - ii. considers the work already undertaken under the Poverty Reduction Act, as well as the Child Poverty Reduction Bill (the Bill). We recommend that the linkages with the Bill need to be strengthened, to show the relevant connections between the measures set out in the Bill and the intention of the different domains and outcome areas in the Framework
 - iii. places greater focus on reducing inequities across all outcome areas, by substantially improving the situation of those disadvantaged. This could be an overarching principle of the Framework for delivery across all outcome areas
 - iv. could enhance the emphasis on the importance of creativity and innovation, access to arts and culture and the role of sport and recreation, for improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people
 - v. needs to provide more focus on housing affordability, noting that Auckland has the highest costs of housing in New Zealand and affordability is a common issue that impacts the living standards of children and young people
 - vi. considers underscoring the importance of mental health as a determinant of child and youth wellbeing, especially given the high incidence of bullying and suicide amongst children and youth in Auckland, and New Zealand as a whole
 - vii. highlights the need for accessible, affordable transport, including active transport options, as a key enabler to children and young people's participation and inclusion
 - viii. needs to focus on adults' role (as current stewards and decision-makers) to care and protect the environment, taking all steps necessary to reduce environmental degradation and deal with the causes and impacts of climate change so that our children can enjoy a healthy environment and a sustainable future
 - ix. puts a greater focus on harm reduction relating to access to alcohol, drugs and gambling by providing stronger regulations as well as adolescent appropriate treatment addiction and mental health services

- x. is developed in consultation with local authorities given the significant role we play in improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people
- xi. is underpinned by a comprehensive action plan and robust evaluation framework and regular monitoring, to allow results to be measured and reported
- xii. that there is long-term and adequate resourcing to deliver on the outcomes and for services at the local level that support the wellbeing of children and youth
- xiii. that there is more collective delivery across central and local government^{iv} and local communities to help maximise efforts and achieve greater collective impact
- xiv. takes into consideration the existing research undertaken by Council and professional bodies, that may support the Framework to provide a strong evidence base for investing in children and young people's well-being.

Horopaki/Context

- 14. Auckland is the largest and fastest growing region in New Zealand, it is also one of the most diverse cities in the world with over 180 ethnicities and 40 per cent of the population is born overseas.
- 15. Auckland is a youthful city. The 2013 Census counted 507,495 children and young people under the age of 24 years living in Auckland, representing 35.9 per cent of the Auckland population.
- 16. A significant number of Auckland's children and young people face adversity:
 - i. nearly 20 per cent of the children and young people of Auckland live in low-income households
 - ii. in 2013, 19 per cent of children aged 0 to 14 in Auckland lived in households with household incomes of \$40,000 or less, well below the \$78,600 median^{iv}
 - iii. the proportion in low income households was particularly high among children living in the four local board areas that make up the Southern Initiative (Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Manurewa and Papakura) and among Māori, Pasifika and Middle Eastern, Latin American and African children
 - iv. Auckland has a disproportionate number of low decile schools (rated 3 or below), and a third of all decile 1 schools in New Zealand are found in Auckland.

Te tātari me te tohutohu/Analysis and advice

17. Auckland Council supports the Framework and its overall intent

- i. The council supports the Framework and its overall intent. We like the comprehensive wellbeing domains and focus areas, which set out bold aspirations for the children and youth of New Zealand.
- ii. We also like that the Framework acknowledges the critical importance of the wider whānau and other carers and support networks to children's wellbeing.
- iii. We agree with the importance of ensuring that whānau have the help and support they need, particularly those under extreme stress.

18. Greater focus on the needs of Māori children and their whanau

- i. There should be more emphasis on improving outcomes for Māori, potentially by creating a stand-alone outcome domain. This is important to demonstrate commitment to the unique position of Māori and their special relationship with the Crown under the Treaty of Waitangi.
- ii. Focus on improving outcomes for young Māori is important because:
 - the Māori population in Auckland is comparatively youthful those aged under five make up 12 per cent of the of the Māori population in Auckland^v
 - Māori children and young people have proportionately lower wellbeing outcomes, over all other ethnicities
 - approximately 50 per cent of Māori students attend a decile 1,2 or 3 school and almost a third of Māori children are living in low income households^{vi}.

19. We need to address equity of outcomes and focus on those most in need - (Domain 2)

- i. The council appreciates the focus on equity and poverty. We would like to see clear alignment with Government legislation such as the Poverty Reduction Act objectives and the Child Poverty Bill. This is especially important in the context of Auckland, where almost a quarter of the children and youth live in areas of economic deprivation and attend low decile schools.
- ii. The Framework should take into consideration the multi-dimensional nature and definition of poverty, beyond income. The definition of poverty should explore structural causality such as affordable housing and transmitted poverty, more explicitly to focus on the wider contributing elements to poverty.
- iii. There could be a greater focus on reducing inequity across all outcome areas, this could be included as an overarching principle of the Framework and focus on substantially improving the situation for those disadvantaged.

20. Culturally appropriate services are required to meet the needs of our growing, diverse and young communities (Domain 3)

- i. The council recognises and celebrates the diversity of Auckland and would like to see stronger language within the Framework relating to the needs of diverse communities. The Framework could reflect more strongly the different realities of children and young people who are part of these communities, and ensure relevant services that cater fully to their wellbeing.
- ii. Auckland's Pacific population is youthful and growing, with a median age of 22.6 years. In 2013, about one in four children in Auckland (24 per cent) had at least one Pacific ethnic identity. However, half of people of Pacific ethnicity aged 0 to 24 years are living in a crowded household and in challenging socio-economic circumstances^{vii}.
- iii. The Framework should consider and address the overarching role inequities play across the diverse ethnicities and populations in Auckland, especially ethnic communities, rainbow communities (LGBTIQ plus), and children with disabilities.
- iv. Reducing inequity is at the core of all the United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Framework may review SDG 10, that aims to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all people irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status.

21. The council agrees and supports the outcome relating to belonging and inclusion (Domain 3)

- i. We strongly agree that children and youth people should be free from racism, bullying, discrimination and stigma. In this context we recommend the Framework also specifically mention discrimination and bullying based on gender identity and sexuality.
- ii. We acknowledge the key issues facing rainbow children and youth and how the council, our partners across government and the community need to work together, to meaningfully empower these young people.
- iii. The council recommends strengthening the emphasis around rainbow youth and to recognise the needs and appropriate services to ensure their overall wellbeing.
- iv. Particular reference and focus on rainbow communities is important because:
 - rainbow young people make up 40 per cent of the homeless youth statistics^{viii}
 - almost half of rainbow youth had seriously thought about taking their own life in the previous year. One in five had attempted suicide, compared with one in 20 of their non-rainbow peers^{ix}
 - rainbow youth were three times more likely to be bullied every week than their peers, and almost half had been hit or hurt at school in the previous year.

22. Importance of affordable, healthy homes (Domain 1)

- i. The council supports the Framework's focus on warm, healthy homes for children, where consequences of illnesses are minimised. This should also include ensuring both physically and emotionally safe and secure homes.
- ii. Strong direction could be provided on the importance on housing stability and the impact this has on the emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people.
- iii. Housing is a particularly important issue for Auckland because:
 - Auckland's children and young people experience the highest levels of over-crowding compared to any other age groups^x
 - the most recent, street count in Auckland identified 2,974 people in temporary or emergency accommodation, and of those people almost 44 per cent were young people under the age of 18^{xi}
 - since 2012, Auckland has gradually experienced an increase in the number of transient students^{xii} to 8.1 per cent^{xiii}. Transient students are less than half as likely to achieve National Certificate of Educational Assessment (NCEA) level 2 and above^{xiv}.
- iv. Security of tenure and reducing transience encourages the development of longstanding community connections, which support wellbeing. Placemaking also plays a role in facilitating this and delivering sustainable social outcomes.

23. Access and participation to arts, culture and sports are key to the health and wellbeing of our children and young people (Domain 4)

- i. The Framework could more clearly reference the important contribution that creativity, innovation and participation in arts and culture have on the wellbeing of children and young people. In particular, the role creativity and innovation play in:
 - the development of social and cognitive skills
 - building social connections and cross-cultural understanding^{xv}
 - supporting a sense of identity

- self-esteem and overall mental wellbeing^{xvi}
 - and improving their ability to actively contribute to wider society.
- ii. The council also recommends increased emphasis on the role of sports, recreation and outdoor activities, including having access to open spaces. This is important to:
- improving the overall mental and physical wellbeing of children and young people^{xvii}, and especially for those children and youth at risk^{xviii}
 - teaching fundamental motor skills and encouraging healthy lifestyles
 - improving educational and social outcomes^{xix}.
- iii. Participation in sports and recreation tends to decrease as children enter their teens. The drop-out rate is particularly high for teenage girls. This is likely to have an impact on the long-term health and physical wellbeing of our young people.

24. Transitions are an important focus area (Domain 5)

- i. The council appreciates the child and youth centred perspective of the Framework, and the focus on the early years. Academic studies have shown that investing in the early years, including early childhood education, supports positive outcomes in later life^{xx}.
- ii. For example, focusing on oral language skills, including talking in children's first or heritage language, in the early years leads to improved learning outcomes and can be a predictor of better long-term wellbeing. Early language is a key contributor to the achievement gap between poorer and more affluent families. Children that start school with a large vocabulary stay ahead^{xxi}.
- iii. We recommend that clear objectives be set around the key transition stages. This is particularly important for disadvantaged communities, to address underlying equity issues.
- iv. Effective transitions between early childhood education and primary school are critical to the development of children's self-worth, confidence and resilience, and ongoing success at school^{xxii}. Similarly, effective transitions into and through secondary schools are important to a student's future achievements and wellbeing^{xxiii}. This focus seems to be missing from the Framework.
- v. Providing a range of pathways after secondary school is also important. Education and skills training for young adults are key steps in equipping young people to be economically active and engage productively in the labour market.
- This is particularly relevant because Auckland has a higher per cent, than average of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET)^{xxiv} and supporting young people as they transition towards employment is important for their economic participation and wellbeing.
 - The higher NEET rate for Auckland highlights the significant proportion of young people that are being left behind on the path to better jobs and economic productivity.
 - Māori and Pacific young people are over-represented in this group. Reasons include leaving the education system earlier, being unable to work or study due to caregiving responsibilities at a younger age, and facing longer durations of unemployment
 - Māori and Pacific young people are facing challenges in finding work in Auckland and their unemployment rate is nearly double that of other groups.

- Practical measures to address this include the Southern Initiative's Māori and Pacific Trades Training Programme, which provides hands on support and mentoring for young people to enter the construction industry and JobFest, organised by ATEED, which offers the opportunity for over 2,000 young people to meet prospective employers.
- Providing appropriate support for young people in the transition to work, for instance around employment rights, remuneration and workplace safety, are areas that need to be strengthened.

25. Children and young people need access to safe, reliable and affordable transport (suggest for Domain 2)

- The council recommends that the Framework is explicit around the need for safe, accessible and affordable public transport. This has direct impact on overall wellbeing of children and young people and is especially important in Auckland given the city's size, road congestion and geographical spread.
- Transport, including active transport options, such as walking and cycling, is an essential enabler to children and youth's participation and inclusion, allowing them to access school, sports and recreation, arts and cultural activities, places of study, work and to stay connected to friends and family. It also helps build their independence, confidence and overall resilience.
- Statistics for Auckland show that transport costs act as a barrier to mobility^{xxv}, with household spending on transport 75 per cent higher than the national average^{xxvi}.

26. Harm reduction - reducing the impacts of drugs, alcohol and gambling (Domain 1)

- The Framework should include a greater focus on harm reduction. This could include strengthening the regulatory environment and creating better alignment between the role of central and local government in relation to harm reduction (i.e. particularly relating to alcohol, drugs, gambling and online safety).
- It is important to also address access to online content and help protect our children and youth from the harmful effects of online gambling, pornography, and cyber bullying.
- Raising greater awareness of the risks as well as reducing access to harmful substances and alcohol, would support the health and wellbeing of children, especially young adolescents.

27. Improving emotional and mental wellbeing (Domain 4)

- The council supports the Framework's focus on mental health for children and young people. This is especially important, given the high rates of bullying in New Zealand schools which is the worst in OECD^{xxvii}. Youth suicide statistics are also particularly high in New Zealand (especially among young Māori men)^{xxviii}. The council feels that this area of the Framework regarding bullying in schools and mental health needs to be strengthened.
- There could be a stronger focus on emotional wellbeing of children and youth, especially around developing healthy relationships and having access to effective sex education.
- We support active measures that provide timely interventions for at risk children and youth in emotional trauma or mental distress.

28. We have a duty to ensure our children have and inherit a clean and healthy environment (Domain 3)

- i. We agree that fostering environmental awareness and responsibility in New Zealand children and youth is important. They are the guardians of the future and need to be encouraged to engage in the issues we face and the solutions to address these.
- ii. The Framework should also place a greater focus on the role adults, as the current stewards and decision-makers, to protect and care for New Zealand's natural environment.
- iii. The council is committed to preserving, protecting and caring for the natural environment as part of our shared cultural heritage, and this an important commitment under the Auckland Plan 2050.
- iv. We must take all steps necessary to reduce environmental degradation and deal with both the causes and impacts of climate change. We have duty to ensure our children have access to clean air and water, can access and enjoy New Zealand's natural heritage (its unique flora and fauna) and inherit a sustainable future.

29. Recognise the important role local government has in supporting children and youth

- i. The council recommends that the Framework reference the important role local government plays in driving change and contributing to the vision for children and youth.
- ii. Local government plays a significant role in delivering services which support the wellbeing of children and youth, such as social infrastructure, local transport, environmental initiatives, community safety and civic participation.
- iii. Local government also plays a key role in supporting communities to develop and deliver sustainable and localised solutions and measures to improve child and youth wellbeing.
- iv. Attached to this submission is the 2017 I am Auckland Status Report, which provides an overview of some of the programmes and initiatives being delivered in Auckland.
- v. Improving the collective delivery of services across central and local government and communities would help maximise the potential to improve overall wellbeing for all children and youth from diverse communities, leading to greater collective impact and transformational change.

30. Ngā koringa ā-muri / Next steps

- i. The council agrees and supports the focus on wellbeing as an ambitious and comprehensive agenda, and that the Framework is the vehicle for realising the aspirations for New Zealand's future.
- ii. We support the development of a comprehensive action plan to underpin delivery of the new outcomes framework, including the development of an evaluation framework with clear outcome measures and indicators. This will be important to monitor progress towards achieving the desired outcomes.
- iii. It will also be essential that the Framework and action plan are well resourced including adequate funding for local services that support the health and wellbeing of children and youth.

- iv. We recommend using a human-centred design approach as the Framework is developed further. This should include the voices of children and youth, and their wider whānau.
- v. We welcome an opportunity to participate and facilitate dialogue with the children and youth in Auckland on this in the future. This will also assist us to better align existing work that the council is undertaking as part of the implementation of *I Am Auckland*.
- vi. The council has conducted extensive research on children and youth profiles, relating to education, housing, health and transport amongst other wellbeing outcomes, with robust evidence linking to equity and access to social infrastructure.
- vii. These references and evidence is easily available from <http://www.knowledgeauckland.org.nz/> would be particularly important for overall planning and policy purposes, to inform decision makers for advancing in this important area of work.

Endnotes

- ⁱ The 2013 Census available at <http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census.aspx>
- ⁱⁱ The New Zealand Deprivation Index 2013 (NZDep, 2013)
- ⁱⁱⁱ I am Auckland – Status Report – 2017
- ^{iv} Reid, A and Rootham, E (2016). A profile of children and young people in Auckland. Auckland Council technical report, TR2016/022.
- ^v Statistics New Zealand, Census of Population and Dwellings, 2013
- ^{vi} Hirini, P and Collings, S. 2005. Whakamomori: He whakaaro, he kōrero noa. A collection of contemporary views on Māori and suicide. Report 3: Social Explanations for Suicide in New Zealand. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- ^{vii} Goodyear and Fabian - 2014.
- ^{viii} <https://www.lifewise.org.nz/2016/12/12/rainbow/>
- ^{ix} Ibid
- ^x Simpson, J., Oben, G., Craig, E., Adams, J., Wicken, A., Duncanson, M and Reddington, A. 2014. The determinants of health for children and young people in the Northern District Health Boards. Dunedin: New Zealand Child and Youth Epidemiology Service and University of Otago.
- ^{xi} Housing First – survey, 2018 available at <https://www.housingfirst.co.nz/news/initial-findings-of-aucklands-first-region-wide-point-in-time-homeless-count-released>
- ^{xii} Students who attended three or more schools for five years (2010-2014) beginning at Year 1 or Year 9 - Data from the Ministry of Education.
- ^{xiii} Education counts, Ministry of Education
- ^{xiv} Ibid
- ^{xv} Tawell, A., Thompson, I., Daniels, H., Elliott, V. & Dingwall, N. (2015). Being Other: The effectiveness of arts based approaches in engaging with disaffected young people. Oxford: University of Oxford.
- ^{xvi} All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report (2017), Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing
- ^{xvii} Buck, D. (2016). Gardens and Health: Implications for policy and practice. London: The King's Fund.
- ^{xviii} Active NZ, Sports New Zealand, 2018
- ^{xix} Lubans David K, Plontnikoff Ron C. Lubans Nicole, 2012 Review: A Systematic review of the impact of physical activity programs on social and emotional wellbeing in at risk youth.
- ^{xx} High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 (2005) found that adults age 40, who had attended a high-quality preschool programme had higher earnings, committed fewer crimes, were more likely to be employed and more likely to have graduated from high-school. The public benefit assessment estimated that for every \$1USD invested, the social return was \$12.90USD.
- ^{xxi} Van Hees, J. (2011). "The expressive realities of five-and six-year old students in Year 1 and 2 classes in low-socio-economic schools." SET 43: 47-54
- ^{xxii} Continuity of learning: transitions from early childhood services to schools, Education Review Office - 2015
- ^{xxiii} Evaluation at a glance: transitions from primary to secondary school. Education Review Office (2012)
- ^{xxiv} Statistics New Zealand
- ^{xxv} Nielson (2018), Quality of Life Survey - 2018 – Auckland Report
- ^{xxvi} Statistics New Zealand -2016
- ^{xxvii} New Zealand has the worst rate of bullying in the OECD, with just under 60% of students experiencing bullying either weekly or monthly - more than twice the rate of the countries with the lowest rates
- ^{xxviii} Stuff.co.nz available at <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/106532292/new-zealand-suicide-rate-highest-since-records-began>