



Proactive Release

Submissions on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

August 2019

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has released the following submission received during its public consultation on the child and youth wellbeing strategy.

Some of the information contained within this release is considered to not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

- Where this is the case, the information has been withheld, and the relevant section of the Act that would apply, has been identified.
- Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to redaction codes and their reference to sections of the Act:

- **9(2)a** – Section 9(2)(a): to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people.

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Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy – Submission Template

This document is intended for individuals or groups who wish to make a formal submission on the child and youth wellbeing strategy.

Please complete this template and email it to: childandyouthwellbeing@dpmc.govt.nz

A guide to making a submission is available on the DPMC website <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy>

Submissions will close on **Wednesday 5 December**.

Please provide details for a contact person in case we have some follow up questions.

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Phone Number:	JGD GD
Organisation Name:	CAYAD National Coordination Team
Organisation description: (tell us about your organisation – i.e. who do you represent? How many members do you have? Are you a local or national organisation?)	<p>This submission is from the National Community Action on Youth and Drugs (CAYAD) National Coordination Team, based in the SHORE & Whariki Research Centre of Massey University. We provide national coordination, workforce development and evidence-based advice for the CAYAD programme, which operates in 21 sites around Aotearoa. This submission is based on our research and experience and does not represent the views of all individual CAYAD organisations.</p> <p>The CAYAD programme is funded by the Ministry of Health to support young people to succeed and in particular to prevent and reduce the harms young people experience from alcohol and other drugs. CAYAD brings together leaders from local communities, organisations and young people to collaborate and create lasting changes in their environment that will promote wellbeing and reduce the risk of harm.</p>

Executive Summary:

(Please provide a short summary of the key points of your Submission - 200 words)

Key points regarding the Strategy's vision and framing:

- We support the vision, and ask whether a specific strategy for rangatahi Maori may also be needed
- We very strongly support the focus on core determinants of health – this is vital to reducing demand and improving the impact of intensive services
- The Strategy seems to influence only policies that specifically address poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, which is too narrow. Other policies also significantly affect wellbeing (e.g. education, workplace or justice). Making the wellbeing outcomes framework a guide for all policy will help it succeed. **We propose all policy decisions should be formally assessed for their potential to improve (or detract from) the wellbeing outcomes.**
- Likewise, the urgent need to reduce environmental degradation and climate change should be assessed in all policy decisions, as this will strongly affect future wellbeing, physically, socially and culturally.

Feedback on the proposed outcomes framework:

- The definition of **outcome 13** should also focus on creating health promoting environments as a major determinant in healthy choices. The focus on individual responsibility and capability alone is insufficient to lift wellbeing at the population level.

Our submission also offers a range of specific ideas for improving wellbeing under outcomes relevant to our experience in CAYAD.

Submission Content

Comments on vision and overall framework

1. We support the vision for wellbeing and the overall collection of outcomes chosen.
2. We strongly support the focus on first addressing the major social determinants of health and wellbeing (poverty, housing, education and employment needs, and discrimination) to prevent and reduce future health, mental health and addiction problems.
3. We also strongly support the focus on partnership with Māori, and empowering young people and communities to be engaged in the decisions that affect their lives.

Suggestions:

Policy decisions in many spheres can have considerable impact on a range of different social determinants of health and wellbeing. However, the draft strategy appears only to influence specific policies whose aim “is or includes reducing child poverty or mitigating the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage”. For the strategy to succeed, all government policies and regulations should be consistent with or actively support the wellbeing outcomes. This will produce greater efficiency and impact than continuing to address issues in different silos.

We propose:

- a) **The strategy should cement wellbeing as a guiding outcome for all policy in Aotearoa New Zealand – similar to a “health in all policies” approach.** Wellbeing impact statements could be required, which assess all policy decisions for their potential impact on advancing the wellbeing outcomes. A suitable cross-departmental group with an appropriate level of political independence could be established to provide this analysis, advice and monitoring.
- b) **The environmental impact of all policy decisions should also be prioritised in the same way, with independent assessment and monitoring.** The environment is integral to the wellbeing of Maori (physically and culturally) and to the health of all New Zealanders. The urgent need for action to limit climate change is inseparable from our future wellbeing.

Comments on the proposed outcomes framework

Please also note our recommendation and rationale for expanding the definition of Outcome 13 below, to include environmental influences on alcohol and other drug misuse. We also offer evidence-based suggestions for improving wellbeing in relation to other outcomes specific to CAYAD’s programme objectives.

(12) Children’s and young people’s mental wellbeing is supported

Recommended approaches and strategies:

- a) Fund health teams based in schools: On-site health teams have helped reduce rates of depression and suicide attempts in low decile schools:
<https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/329817/few-schools-have-enough-resources-for-mental-health>
- b) Support whole school approaches to wellbeing which develop a positive and inclusive school environment. This can support general prevention, early intervention and improved resilience in young people to developing problems with alcohol and other drugs (AOD). CAYAD is currently supporting some schools with Tuturu, a new programme piloting a school-wide approach to wellbeing and to reducing harm from AOD. We would like to see

this continue to be supported and as appropriate expanded to more schools. See:

<http://tuturu.org.nz>

- c) We note social skills development programmes such as Positive Behaviour For Learning (PB4L) support resilience and can reduce future AOD misuse and suicidality. Another initiative, the Good Behaviour Game, has been found to support primary school students' integration into the classroom environment, and has led to reductions in suicidality and misuse of drugs in the teenage years, particularly for students who entered school with challenging behaviour. The strategies could be piloted in PB4L schools. See: <https://www.pmcsa.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/17-07-26-Youth-suicide-in-New-Zealand-a-Discussion-Paper.pdf>
- d) Expand screening and brief intervention for alcohol and other drugs in relevant primary health, community health and justice settings.
- e) CAYAD communities have called for greater availability of treatment programmes for alcohol and other drug issues, for different levels of need. Better access for rural populations is a particular issue, where methamphetamine issues are increasing. Lessons from the Te Ara Oranga evaluation are a good starting point for addressing this need.
- f) Formally decriminalise drug use and instead enable easy referral to screening, intervention (where necessary) and treatment. This will be an important step in building a more supportive environment for people experiencing drug related harm and to increasing access to services.

(13) Children and young people are supported to make positive decisions

Comments on Outcome 13:

- a) We note the **wording of Outcome 13** focuses mainly on informed choice and individual responsibility. We strongly recommend it should include a statement on **building health-promoting environments around young people, where healthy choices are easier to make**. The wording at present does not leave room to address the large impact that alcohol marketing, high levels of availability and social norms have on consumption choices.* Conversely, there is no evidence that expensive mass media campaigns to inform people of healthy choices around alcohol lead to changes in behaviour.

* In New Zealand, substantial spending on sophisticated alcohol advertising and sponsorship continues to paint alcohol as integral to our lifestyle. A recent study of young people in Wellington found children were exposed to alcohol marketing on average 4 to 5 times per day; the rate of exposure for Maori children was 5x higher than the average, and for Pasifika children 3x higher. We know this exposure reduces the age at which young people start drinking, and increases the amounts they drink. Increased use in turn contributes significantly to harm, including escalations in family violence, sexual violence, suicide, self-harm and unprotected sex. Alcohol also remains very cheap and highly accessible, more so in poorer communities, which adds to health inequities.

Recommended approaches and strategies:

- b) The World Health Organisation and [international literature on alcohol](#) highlight that increasing prices and reducing exposure to marketing are among the most cost-effective measures to reduce harmful consumption of alcohol, particularly by young people. We (and a majority of the public) strongly support implementing the Law Commission's recommendations to reduce young people's exposure to alcohol marketing by
 - placing strict legal restrictions on alcohol advertising and marketing (this must now include advertising online as a rapidly growing marketing stream)

- progressively removing alcohol sponsorship of sports, recreational and cultural events

- c) We suggest continued support for programmes and services like CAYAD which address local community norms, practices and policy around alcohol and other drug use, and increase positive opportunities for young people in education, recreation and employment.

(16) All children and young people have an equal chance to gain the skills, knowledge and capabilities for success in life, learning and work

- a) School is a very important protective factor for young people. However, school policies that suspend and exclude students for AOD matters remain common even though the student in question may need significant support. We recommend a nationwide policy requiring schools to make every effort to assess their needs and offer support, with exclusion only possible when other efforts have failed.

[Note our other suggestions for schools under outcome 12]

- b) Support the work of the CAYAD programme to develop connections between schools, employers and learning institutes, including bridging programmes (to support transition to tertiary education) and employment skills training providers in rural communities. CAYAD also works to increase community capacity to provide constructive cultural and recreational programmes for young people.

Please note that your submission will become official information. This means that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may be required to release all or part of the information contained in your submission in response to a request under the Official Information Act 1982.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may withhold all or parts of your submission if it is necessary to protect your privacy or if it has been supplied subject to an obligation of confidence.

Please tell us if you don't want all or specific parts of your submission released, and the reasons why. Your views will be taken into account in deciding whether to withhold or release any information requested under the Official Information Act and in deciding if, and how, to refer to your submission in any possible subsequent paper prepared by the Department.