



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.

Contact Name:	9(2) (a)
Email Address:	
Phone Number:	
Organisation Name:	Child and Youth Friendly Christchurch
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>Based on the UNICEF framework for Child Friendly Cities, the Child and Youth Friendly Christchurch initiative is a local adaptation, in order to extend our focus to include Christchurch young people up to the age of 18. Without the right to vote, we acknowledge the importance of providing greater support to our younger citizens in ensuring they have a voice. In essence, our approach is based on the belief that children and young people thrive in a city that values ALL young citizens.</p> <p>Our purpose governing our action is to create a Christchurch where children and young people's environments and everyday lives are actively influenced by their voices, needs, priorities and rights.</p> <p>We approach this objective through the following key areas:</p> <p>Mobilise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting organisations, businesses and individuals to run projects that make a real practical difference. <p>Empower</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving children and young people a voice through consultation and participation. <p>Advocate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the wellbeing of children & young people.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting awareness of their needs & rights, for better policies & decision making. <p>We believe that investment in Christchurch’s children and young people is the foundation for a thriving city and a prosperous future for Christchurch. It’s a great way to ensure that children are given the best possible chance to reach their potential and to become productive and fulfilled citizens. It provides a means of positively influencing where children live, grow, learn and develop.</p> <p>We are currently a collective effort of government, local business, community organisations and Christchurch residents. Child Friendly Christchurch is truly an initiative in which everyone can play a part, working together to make Christchurch the best city for children and young people to grow up in.</p> <p>For more details on Child and Youth Friendly Christchurch, please visit: www.childandyouthfriendlychristchurch.org.nz</p>
<p>Executive Summary: (Please provide a short summary of the key points of your Submission - 200 words)</p>	<p>CYFC strongly supports the ambition of this strategy putting children’s and young people’s wellbeing at the centre of our society. It is an approach that we have been leading at a local city level since the Canterbury earthquakes.</p> <p>Our key message is to include more strongly a duty of local government to support child and youth wellbeing as the young are users of many locally provided services. They are also significantly impacted by local government decisions such as city and town planning, public transport, local amenities, road safety etc.</p> <p>For children in urban areas (which is the vast majority of children in Aotearoa) local council planning decisions have big impact on their lives and environments. There is considerable evidence of the benefit of child friendly city planning which we believe councils should incorporate in their long term plans.</p> <p>It is also important that local communities are motivated to support the young through the development of local data which tells the story of what is live to grow up in their city or town.</p>

Submission Content

Child and Youth Friendly Christchurch (CYFC) congratulates the New Zealand Government on its vision to make “*New Zealand is the best place in the world for children and young people*”. *We fully support a prioritisation of the needs of children and youth, many of which have no voice in the political process as they are too young to vote.* CYFC would like to suggest that the word “all” be placed before the word “children” to emphasise the importance of equity.

Scope:

Section 17 We support the definition of children includes young people up to the age of 25 in some circumstances.

Section 18: Use of comparative data

We support the use of national and international data to give insights into the welfare of our children and young people. We would also like to see the development of local data for cities and smaller communities so that local people understand how their local children are doing. Currently for example, localised measures of child poverty are not available. This data is a powerful communication tool to motivate local community led action. It also allows the tracking of child wellbeing over time.

Section 23: An ambitious strategy with a broad scope

We support the notion that improving the quality of life for children is in all our interests and requires cross sector action engaging all parts of the community. We would like to see the strategy place greater emphasis on the role of local government in children’s lives such as through built environment planning, local amenities, local transport and the need for local council’s to contribute to child wellbeing. We would support a duty being placed on local authorities to consider the impacts of all decision made on child and youth wellbeing.

Framing of wellbeing

CYFC supports the general framing of the Strategy that is evidence-informed, outcome-focused and includes accountability mechanisms. We support the ecological approach which recognises:

- The broader context (family, social, cultural) within which wellbeing takes place ¹, and which are themselves dimensions of wellbeing
- The individual, family and community factors that contribute to wellbeing. ² For example, the wellbeing of tamariki Māori is inextricably tied up with the wellbeing of their whanau. ³The wellbeing domains (safety, security,

¹ Bronfenbrenner, L. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development*. London: Harvard University Press.

² Biddulph, F., et al. (2003). *The Complexity of Community and Family Influences on Children’s Achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

³ Inquiry into the determinants of wellbeing for tamariki Māori. Report of the Māori Affairs Committee. December 2013.

connectedness, wellness and development) generally cover those areas known in an number of international jurisdictions to contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people.⁴

Underlying principles

CYFC supports these seven principles and in particular we support the specific reference to the foundational role of the Treaty of Waitangi. However we suggest that this is expressed as Te Tiriti o Waitangi as it is demonstrating Te Reo Māori on the face of the document.

1. We **recommend** that the voices of children and young people are also taken into account in measuring the outcomes. While #5 includes children and young people in the development and implementation of the strategy, it is not explicit that they will have a say when these outcomes are measured.
2. The principles refer to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as underpinning the strategy. Articles 17, 23, 27, and 32 refer to the child's spiritual wellbeing and development, however the draft child wellbeing strategy is silent on this. Spiritual wellbeing is recognised as key component in Māori models of health and wellbeing.
3. We support the inclusive statement of the last principle which states the collective responsibility to nurture children, young people and their carers. We recommend consistent wording in relation to families, whānau and caregivers is used throughout the document. This will ensure that caregivers are recognised when there is not a formal genetic or familial tie to the child or young person.

Outcome Framework

We support the proposed outcomes for children & young people with some additions.

Safety – children are safe, and feel safe

1. As Aotearoa|New Zealand has high rates of abuse, family violence and youth suicide, we support the specific reference to children and young people living in homes which are free from abuse, neglect and family violence.
2. We recommend an outcome that specifically relates to a reduction in New Zealand's rate of child abuse, neglect and family violence be included.
3. We recommend that the third bullet point also references family violence and reads, "Adults enjoy good mental health, including freedom from severe stress and violence, misuse of alcohol and drugs."
4. We recommend that the reference to children in care includes reference to support and reads, "Children and young people in care have a safe environment and relationships of care, support, trust and connection."
5. We recommend that the reference to bullying is strengthened to read, "Bullying in school and recreational environments is addressed and the rates of bullying reduced."

4. For example: 1) Better Outcomes Brighter Futures. The national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020 (Ireland). 2) The Toronto Child and Family Network (2013) Raising the Village: Measuring the Wellbeing of Children and Families in Toronto. 3) Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth Report Card: The Wellbeing of Young Australians.

Security – children enjoy sufficient financial, natural and social resources to thrive

6. We support the security outcomes related to affordable quality housing. We recommend that “safe” is included in relation to housing.

7. We support the security outcomes relating to the reduction of child poverty and equity of services.

Connectedness – children understand who they are, where they belong, and their connection to whānau, culture and community

8. We support the connectedness outcomes framework and focus areas as drafted.

Wellness – children enjoy the best physical and mental health

9. We recommend that this includes spiritual wellbeing. Most Māori models of health include taha wairua/wairuatanga or spiritual health and recognises that health is related to unseen and unspoken energies.

10. We recognise that some children, young people and those caring for them often need support to make healthy decisions about food, exercise and sleep. Therefore we recommend that the wording is changed to include this and read, “Children, young people and those caring for them have the knowledge, resources, and support to make healthy decisions about food, exercise and sleep.”

10b. Similarly, we recognise that some children, young People and those caring for them live in environments that can either enhance or compromise the ability to make healthy decisions about food, exercise and sleep. We recommend another change of working to read, ‘Children, young People and those caring for them have the knowledge, resources, and environmental support to make healthy decisions about food, exercise and sleep.’

11. We recommend the second bullet point under #11 should include young people.

12. We recommend that #12 include specific reference to spiritual and suggest the following wording, “Children’s and young people’s spiritual and mental wellbeing is supported.”

13. We recommend an outcome that specifically relates to the reduction of child and youth suicide.

16 Priority Areas

1. The Government has identified 16 potential areas of focus in the strategy with six areas proposed for initial focus. All 16 areas have merit and CYFC supports the proposed initial areas for focus including:

- *Child poverty is reduced, in line with the Government’s intermediate and ten-year targets* – means addressing homelessness; ensuring children have access to healthy food like fruits and vegetables and that they do not go to school hungry; that they live in a quality home that is affordable; and that they are able to participate in out-of-school activities.
- *Children experience optimal development in their first 1000 days: safe and positive pregnancy, birth and parenting (conception to around two years)* – recognises that a healthy pregnancy is important for the neurological development of the child and the potential impact on child development of maternal anxiety and depression during pregnancy; that working with families

in a way that supports attachment, encourages breast feeding and recognises early sign of post-natal depression is important; and that there is strong evidence that intervention during a child's early years can provide the type of support necessary to enhance children's health and cognitive development.

- *Children are thriving socially, emotionally and developmentally in the early years (two to six years)* – recognises that severe adversities in the early years have a lifelong impact on a child's brain development, physiological reactions to stress and later mental and physical health. Devoting resources to supporting families and young children can potentially prevent these kinds of adverse outcomes.
- *Children are safe and nurtured, in their whānau and their homes* – recognises the criticality of addressing New Zealand high rate of family violence
- *Children's mental wellbeing is supported*
- *Children are free from racism, discrimination and stigma.*

In addition the first of these – reducing child poverty should include a focus on families having access to affordable, stable and good quality housing. Housing is a key determinant of health and the absence of good quality housing has the potential to undermine the achievement of outcomes in other areas.

We also support the prioritising children and young people with disabilities so they experience improved opportunities and outcomes. This should include to access community amenities such as playgrounds, swimming pools and within the education sector where currently only those with the highest needs get support.

Another area for consideration is the impact of the environment on the wellbeing of children and young people. The environment that forms the physical context for their lives comprises the places where people live, learn work, play, and socialize, the air they breathe, and the food and water they consume.⁴ For example, the built environment should be accessible for all, allow safe independent travel, enable healthy life styles for children and families and provide a place to play. The child friendly cities approach has many examples from around the world which demonstrates how child focused city design benefits all.⁵

Operational action plans

We note the Cabinet paper states that the Wellbeing Strategy will inform the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan and the potential for a child poverty reduction action plan. We

5. ARUP (2017) Cities Alive: Designing for urban childhoods at <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/cities-alive-urban-childhood>

support the creation of both these action plans as it is not clear how the desired outcomes in the Wellbeing Strategy will translate into an integrated and meaningful cross-sector action plan. We **recommend** these action plans should include the whole range of stakeholders: the government sector, the community based sector (social and health services), families, whānau, the business sector and the private sector, to ensure that New Zealand society as a whole is held to the high standard of achieving the aspirational vision.

Governance and responsibility

We **recommend** that there is non-government representation on the governance group responsible for the wellbeing strategy. The Cabinet paper makes numerous references to the knowledge, insights and ideas coming from outside Government it would seem prudent to include representation from the community sector in the governance group.

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.