



## 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](mailto: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.**

<b>Contact Name:</b>	9(2)□(a)
<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>Phone Number:</b>	
<b>Organisation Name:</b>	I am submitting as a personal submission
<b>Organisation description:</b> (tell us about your organisation – i.e. who do you represent? How many members do you have? Are you a local or national organisation?)	9(2)□(a)
<b>Executive Summary:</b> (Please provide a short summary of the key points of your Submission - 200 words)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congratulations for undertaking this piece of work.</li> <li>• Make the Vision child-centred</li> <li>• Consider using the existing Pae Ora Framework</li> <li>• Mandate Te Reo to be taught in all schools starting in preschool and extending through to highschool</li> <li>• Prioritise reducing poverty and provision of adequate and affordable housing</li> <li>• Focus on the” first 1000 days”</li> <li>• Rectify the Justice System so that it provides rehabilitation and does not mislabel neurodisability, mental ill health and addiction as criminality and further exacerbate inequity.</li> <li>• Ensure Mindfulness is taught in all schools from preschool</li> <li>• Teach civics in all school to children from primary school</li> <li>• Lower the voting age to 16yr of age</li> <li>• Amend the Local Government Act in favour of child wellbeing</li> <li>• Make public Transport free for children and young people.</li> </ul>

## Submission Content

I would like to congratulate the government on the courage and leadership it is showing to tackle big issues facing NZ including climate change and inequality and specifically child poverty. I am encouraged that this government has indicated a commitment to try to address these challenging and complex issues because they are critically important and directly impact on the wellbeing of all NZers and particularly children and will determine the future of our country.

I am a Paediatrician 9(2)(a). I work with children with health concerns and those with developmental problems and disabilities. I also work with Oranga Tamariki and children and young people involved with their service. I see and hear the outcomes of poverty, social isolation, parental mental illness and addictions, transiency and marginalisation on a daily basis in the children and families I work with. I am overwhelmed by the ever increasing social complexity, challenges and crises facing the families I am working with and the inadequacy of the current systems and structures to support them.

It is fantastic that the government has undertaken to create a Child Wellbeing Strategy and that this Strategy will be legislated under the Child Poverty Reduction Bill as cross government long term commitment is critical to try to improve the wellbeing of the Children and Youth of NZ.

In response to the Draft Child Wellbeing Strategy Proposed Outcomes Framework

Firstly regarding the **Vision**, I suggest it needs to be child centred ie not about the place but about the people Eg All children in NZ are nurtured to reach their full potential

Regarding the **Wellbeing Domains** – It is concerning that these are purely about the individual. Consideration could be given to the Pae Ora framework. There is a need to include Whanau Ora and Wai Ora as well as Mauri Ora (current domains only relate to Mauri Ora).

It is concerning that the Proposed Outcomes Framework does not acknowledge the prime importance of the social determinants of health in achieving the “Desired outcomes Acknowledging the role of colonisation in contributing to the current inequity of outcomes experienced by our Maori tamariki is critical to trying to redress them.

Principle 4 The Foundational role of the Treaty of Waitangi is not reflected in the Wellbeing domains or Desired Outcomes. Acknowledging and honouring our commitment under the Treaty is central to redressing inequity and directly relates to the focus areas 7. And 8. A tangible starting point for showing this commitment would be to mandate Te Reo to be taught in all schools in NZ beginning at preschool. This would go some way to improve cross cultural understanding and empathy.

Regarding the **potential focus areas** I think these are all valid aspirations. As far as ranking importance though I would draw attention to **4. Housing and 5. Child Poverty**. These two issues are interrelated and I would advocate for them for prime consideration as they are about ensuring basic human needs are met. This is the bottom of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It is well established both from an understanding of psychology and neuroscience that these survival needs need to be met in order for higher functions

(love/belonging, esteem and self-actualisation) intrinsic in the other focus areas to be realized.

The WOF for Housing is a positive initiative to begin to improve the quality of the housing stock in NZ. However affordability also needs to be addressed and targeted to those with the greatest need. I have some concerns that the current Kiwi Build scheme is not achieving this. Social housing provided at an affordable level, which will be well below market rates, will be required for our poorest people. However if we are serious about addressing wealth inequality then we need to enable poor people to own their own homes – this is also in line with the TOW and tino rangatiratanga.

Evidence from both economics and neuroscience agrees that the earlier in the lifecourse we invest in a child's life the greater the return both in terms of developmental outcomes and financial return. Therefore I would advocate for **focus area 14. "best development in "first 1000 days"** as a critical area for investment. As a clinician working with children with developmental disorders I want to advocate for adequate resourcing, both in Education and Health, for assessment and intervention services to ensure timely access to services and the greatest possible gains. I would also advocate for those children in the care of, or at risk of being in the care of, Oranga Tamariki having priority access to services both within Health and Education.

I would also advocate for the development of an Infant Mental Health Workforce at a primary care level - probably ideally embedded within Well Child Tamariki Ora services and supported by secondary mental health services and a skilled and well resourced perinatal and early childhood community social worker workforce.

I congratulate the DPMC for including the recognition of neurodisability and neurodiversity as a focus area because I am concerned about the current inequity that exists regarding access to service being based on diagnostic classifications rather than need. I would also like to emphasise the necessity of addressing the current inequity in the funding of child disability services across NZ which is based on historic funding allocations and creates disparity in service provision across the country.

Regarding focus area **10. Empowering people to make healthy lifestyle decisions** it is concerning that there is no recognition of the social determinants of health. Creating Supportive environments are key to enabling behaviour change as espoused by Geoffrey Rose and enshrined in the Ottawa Charter. There are clear evidence based legislative changes and taxation policies that could be enacted to support this ie limiting access, availability and affordability of alcohol and sugar and making the healthy choices around nutrition and physical activity the easy choices.

Focus Area 1. There is no acknowledgement of the contribution of the Justice System to addressing this issue. It is estimated that 20000 NZ children have a parent in prison. ([www.superu.govt.nz](http://www.superu.govt.nz)) It is extremely concerning that currently violent offenders are being placed on bail in the homes of children, and sometimes with the very victims of their crimes. Wrap around support, and evidence based intensive rehabilitation programmes are needed for violent offenders in the community to ensure the safety of children and to break the intergenerational transmission of violence and trauma.

Regarding focus area **12. Children' and Young people's mental health is supported** the prevalence of significant emotional regulation and mental health illness in children and

young people is such that consideration should be given to rolling out universal evidence based mindfulness training, for children and young people which could begin in preschool and initially be targeted to low decile schools in areas of high deprivation. Pause, Breathe and Smile is a researched based mindfulness programme that has been developed in NZ schools and is supported by the Mental Health Foundation of NZ.

In line with the principles underpinning the Strategy, and particularly those of the TOW and UNCROC, I would recommend that civics is taught to all children in NZ throughout primary and secondary school. Consideration could also be given to lowering the current voting age in NZ to 16yr of age which would give young people in NZ a political voice and would be a tangible expression of the government's commitment to respecting and valuing young people. At a local government level, amendments could be made to the Local Government Act to ensure all local governments nominate a councillor as a representative for children and another as a representative for youth. Also it could be required that local governments consider the possible impact on children and youth of all decisions made by councils.

I would also like to highlight that **Transport** is a key determinant of access to services and activities and especially for those most disadvantaged and geographically isolated. Consideration could be given to providing free public transport for all children and young people in NZ as a way of improving equity.

Thankyou for this opportunity to contribute to the development of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

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.