



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:	Unemployed 9(2)(a)
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?)	N/A Please don't dismiss this application on the premises of who I represent. As I understand it you were after community input and despite my current representation level or lack thereof, I have invested time and energy into this submission. Organisations that I have represented and experiences from the past include but are not limited to: Auckland Council (Outdoor Education Sector), Kelly Club Kids Care, SkillzNZ, Forrest Schools, NZ Waterpolo 9(2)(a))
Executive Summary: (Please provide a short summary of the key points of your Submission - 200 words)	Lets look at solutions orientated preventable measures of ways in which to implement these ideals. The framework and focus points are in place, although respectively broad, how can we better target the main impacts that are affecting our children. The underlying premise of what is happening and how we can implement changes to support this vision. This document includes: Looking at the big picture and strategies Restructure suggestion of main categories for focus points Feedback on 4 focus areas General suggestion

Submission Content

Firstly, I would like to applaud the Child Wellbeing Strategy initiative simply by opening the door to attaining a deeper understanding of where New Zealand can improve, learn and develop. This initiative not only provides a platform but also a means by which we can supportively implement positive and impactful changes in our communities. The fact that you have made this open to public insight is allowing the opportunity to bridge the gap between well intended words or ideas and reality of what is happening and needed. Given a notable amount of experience working with children and youth I believe I have attained some ideas that may be of value to you in the construction of these pathways forward.

As a starting premise and something that is touched on briefly in the construction of your framework is that it must be remembered that children are directly impacted by the influences that surround them. To create positive changes with a focus point on children and young ones I believe it to be imperative that an equal focus goes into the workplace, home and teaching environments. Often we focus all of our energy on one aspect while neglecting another and this undoubtedly hinders the rate in which change can occur. The framework itself is reflective of looking at the bigger picture of children's overall wellbeing. As a result of this widened vantage point, it can appear on one side as a list of ideals and perhaps it is but this I believe is a significant starting premise to plant a foundation in which to grow.

The content that has been constructed in this framework in my opinion is alignment with the overall vision of New Zealand being the best place in the world for children and gives insight into the focal areas necessary to make this a reality. However, in terms of strategy I believe it lacks the structure as to how this might be achieved? The definition of strategy from the dictionary states: "A plan of action designed to achieve a long term or overall aim." Unless I have missed something in the condensed provided I feel it really lacks the supporting context of how these ideals or focus areas might be achieved. I won't pretend to have the answers here and my awareness on what is currently in place is limited to the experiences I hold but from that alone I definitely have some suggestions that may assist you in this development.

It states in the child wellbeing Scope and public engagement in section 23.4 under Ambitious Strategy with a Broad scope that it is to provide a clear basis for government decision-making about future child policy priorities and investment decisions. Arguably it must be in question that having such a broad list targeting all areas that should be a point of focus would make this even more of a difficult task to know which direction to place funds? Any of the 16 focus areas under identified under the 5

domains sought for all children are of value for enhancing child wellbeing and although some are clearly overlapping I believe it is imperative that you sit back and see what the largest impact shifts in our society would be and how that might affect the broadest range of ideals.

Personally I believe it would be in the best interest of this approach to group and separate these into fewer categories and focus areas then be broken down further. Granted these may not be directly related but some of the solutions can positively affect each area you have mentioned (with some overlap)

For example:

Whanau / Community /

Focus Areas: safety, housing, environment, poverty, equal accessibility to resources, civic engagement, social interactions, family support, activities, pregnancy support, early childhood, family support, awareness initiatives, community inclusivity for everyone as equals, education initiatives (as below), growing sustainable areas – children's school projects **Wellness**.

- Set up a structure that filters the directives and implements the attention and needs of the community that are not being met and the ways in which we can better support our young ones.
- Establish the overlaps – for example – supporting children in
- **Pregnancy and early childhood**
May need a separate category from above since based on your research this represents an initial focus point.

Education

Focus Areas: accessibility to schooling/education, wellness, connectivity to nature and the environment in which we live, Community awareness, Te Ao Maori and Te Reo Maori, experiential learning, life skills initiative, catering for growing minds and initiatives, recognising that the schooling system does not nurture all unique learning strategies and implementing ways in which it can, breeching the gap between bookwork learning and work experience, sustainability teachings and experiences, pro social, acceptance of selves, nurtured and supported development, wellbeing, mental awareness/support, pregnancy support, child base initiated learning, reward system that credits all abilities (success fail bench mark and pressure that exists is not harbouring positivity in children)
Understanding the advanced minds presenting in schools – Autism ADD ADHD and how to facilitate ways for their development in conjunction with others.

Education to families – direct influence of our children

Education to teachers – direct influence of our children

Education continued

Notes: I believe that any of your categories of focus areas can be addressed in direct learning initiatives in school. Paving the way for future success. Recently I taught a yoga class in a school and was amazed to discover the profound stress levels these children were harbouring. From such a young age children have full schedules, pressure on successes and grades and sporting achievements and yes some pressure is good but at what point do they look after themselves in the equation? Or do they learn ways to foster and nurture life. At the moment it seems like the point is being missed it is simply stepping stones for more business and more stress and yes they may be conditioned well for it but at what expense?

Wellness

Should be a sub category but an underlining focus in each area. Wellness and wellbeing is the focus of this strategy. All the points you raised are ways in which to support children and young adults over all wellbeing. This can run into families, support, caregivers, teachers and kids. As role models to the children we are hoping to find benefit for we must identify that as their main influence we too need to focus on changes.

Would be great to see a government supported initiative that is placed on all employers of implementing wellness in every environment. A lot of businesses would love to but they are in need of support as to where to start. Education system has begun doing more along these lines but I still feel there is more to be done.

Employment/living/opportunities

Focus areas: Security,

Overlaps: Affordability housing, family support, education WELLNESS Although this is directed towards adults the impact and effect of positive working environments are undeniably influencing children. Wellness in the workplace would significantly reduce the stresses that occur in homes and the harbouring stresses children are experience from what one might refer to as an attainable living environment. It appears as though a majority of people I engage with are too busy to consider supporting their fundamental needs let along their children. I would argue to make the greatest impact in our children's lives and wellbeing it would make the most sense to look at their direct influences and work on creating pathways to change their current environments. As a society we are crippled with stress and despite our best intentions are yet to find a solution to implementing ways to support ourselves and one another in learning new approaches to finding some balance in this relentless world in which we live. Between structures in schools and business we are

creating a pressure cooker that is resulting in Mental health days, sickness, unhappiness, child neglect, filtered down anxiety and stress. Remembering that our children are a biproduct of our society as a whole this too must be a focus point. We cannot expect to foster change if we ourselves are not willing to nurture change.

GENERAL focus areas

SAFETY

- Nurtured in their homes – imperative and you have touched on the focus areas but the how is fundamental – how can you strive for assurances of safety in homes, free of drugs/alcohol (the child care is easier to support directly)

SECURITY

- Great!! More affordable housing, employment, accessibility. This is easier to measure – what about child initiatives such as sustainability teachings, community food forests etc, preventable measures for future employment with a focus on Youth transitioning

CONNECTEDNESS

- Agree but feel it needs to include connectivity to nature (environment). We have natural resources available to us that have proven to be beneficial to reducing stress and also worked in remarkable ways with mental health. With the environment in which we live we are forever disconnected and this creates an imbalance in our basic human needs. This is vital for all children in particular with the increasing technology age.

WELLNESS

- Covers most basis but will revisit the influences of our society. Wellness in children is imperative but are our teachers supporting themselves, our families? Mental health should be preventative actions not just support groups for those suffering. There should be equal focus on the methods available to support things before they become critical.

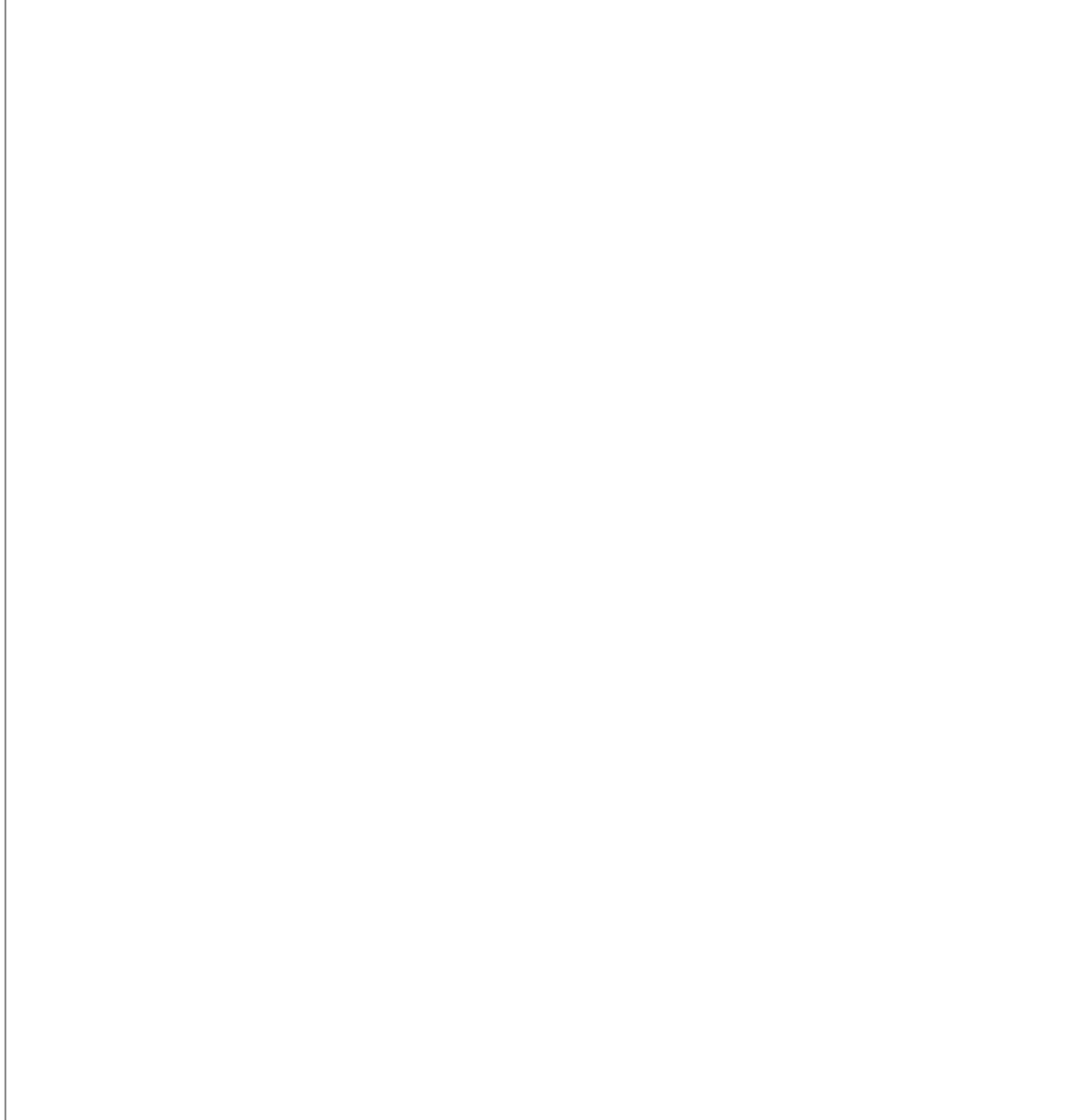
DEVELOPMENT

- As long as there is acknowledgement that our current systems and expectations on teachers and students do not meet all the unique learning styles that exist. If fostering early childhood development is one of the initial focuses, then family support must be in place as this is their initial influence in life.

GENERAL

I have spent a large amount of time working with children in various age groups and I wholeheartedly agree there is more to be done to support and nurture the development of these young minds. 9(2)(a)

Conscious Kid's is a nature based learning initiative that fosters the development of children's minds by allowing them the space and freedom to pursue their interests. It is profound the result it is having on these young children. The impact of being in nature has undeniable effects as has been proven around the world in several studies. This organisation began with a group of parents who believed in harnessing their children's rights to learn, develop and play in an environment that supported them. It has since grown rapidly due to increasing demand and has of late now engaged in a one-day program initiative. This is one of many organisations who are making a positive impact on our children's future independently. Imagine if you as a government and leaders of our country could integrate and create a connectivity with schools and these group initiatives so that it could have this positive influence on all of our developing minds. It has indeed from my experience become evident that parents are now seeking alternative ways as their child is not fitting in the classroom dynamic. So why not change the dynamic and find ways to foster all children, harness their creativity and innovations and applaud the differences in their style of learnings. Classroom disruption is at an all-time high and it's not a reflection of the teachers it is a reflection of the environment. 9(2)(a) Conscious Kids cater for a large group of high functioning children who simply do not fit this class environment. Why not use these experiences and look at a new strategy for supporting children in our current systems that reach a wider group? After all we all are passionately working towards the same goal of nurturing our children and young adults wellbeing.



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.