



## 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

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<b>Organisation Name:</b>	NZ Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW NZ) Inc.
<b>Organisation description:</b>	<p>Business Professional Women is an international organization with representatives in over 100 countries. Our organisation's aims are to link Professional and business women throughout the world so that they may provide support to each other, lobby for change and promote the ongoing advancement of women and girls.</p> <p>We work for equal opportunities and status for all women in economic, civil, and political life and for the removal of discrimination in all countries. We promote our aims and organise our operating structure without distinction as to race, language, or religion.</p> <p>BPW New Zealand represents approximately 300 members in New Zealand spread across the country from Kaitia to Christchurch.</p>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p>We stress the importance of education. We note this is highlighted in proposed focus areas – points 3, 6, 14, 15 and 16. Nevertheless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are really concerned about the lack of Early Childhood Education links and connection with government strategies. It is essential to the achievement of this strategy that it is not just considered in isolation. We recommend that a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach should be expressed, to ensure that the strategy is implemented from every angle.</li> <li>• Education starts well before school. The earlier learning and behavioural issues are identified and the earlier the support can be implemented, the better the outcomes will be for children.</li> <li>• We are loading up schools with support and funding yet if it started in ECE it would lessen the resources needed in the schooling years.</li> <li>• We would like the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy to clearly make clear reference in Principle 6 to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and benchmark its progress</li> </ul>

against relevant SDGs and in conjunction with the Wellbeing Framework's indicators.

### Submission Content

BPW NZ enthusiastically support the overall direction and intent of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and support the Proposed Outcomes Framework and Vision of New Zealand being the best place in the world for children and young people. We make comments in this submission to add to the proposed focus areas.

We stress the importance of **education**. We note this is highlighted in proposed focus areas – points 3, 6, 14, 15 and 16.

There are many children in New Zealand schools whose educational opportunities are limited due to lack of support from whanau. They fail to attend school regularly, they fail to go on excursions, they fail to join team sports or cultural groups and they often do not have anyone who attends school meetings or interviews. This puts the child in a side-lined situation within the school community. Many children are isolated and operate in a small insular sub-group within our societal communities.

Full involvement in education is the only way this can change in the long term. Education from a very young age must be a desired outcome. Compulsory early childhood from 3 years of age should be fully funded as part of the education sector. Learning basic literacy and social competency skills creates the best platform for continued learning throughout life. We load schools with resource to rectify this lack yet if it started in early childhood education it would lessen the need later and better outcomes would be achieved long-term.

To truly make a difference we need central government to take the lead and include in the proposed strategy support for whanau and a more effective Early Childhood Education framework. Education starts well before school. We all know that the earlier learning and behavioural issues are identified and the earlier the support can be implemented, the better the outcomes will be for children.

We also highlight the importance of **innovation** and **forward-thinking**. If we truly do believe that children and young people are our future, then hopefully we will also agree that such a future involves their active engagement and participation to improve services that are about them and for them and with the future in mind. The newly designed strategy should not only aim to deliver and improve existing services, it should aim to take on the challenge to change services entirely, recognising the need to do so. It is essential to dismantle existing models of service to now deliver a forward-thinking approach to empowering, assisting and developing young people through active engagement and meaningful participation of their whanau in all stages of their education.

For New Zealand to be a centre of innovation and excellence, we need to actively work in partnership with children, young people, parents and practitioners more so that we are doing at present. To ensure they are actively engaged and influence real change, we need to use a range of approaches. We need active, supported and empowered children, young people, parents and practitioners to work in partnership with central and local government in service improvement, innovation, strategic planning and governance. We also need to listen to, learn

from and respond to children, young people, parents and those who are underrepresented to ensure their views and experiences underpin and inform change.

- BPW NZ agrees with the *Wellbeing Domains* scope the multiple dimensions of wellbeing meaningfully
- We support most of the *Desired Outcomes* of the proposed Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy however, Desired outcome “*Children and young people feel connected to their family, whānau and communities, ...*” we believe this is an incorrect assumption. Not every child is connected to their community or actively included in school. If their parent(s) is/are not engaged in the school system, possibly because they themselves failed in it and disconnected from a young age, there is a very high chance their children will follow in the same path.

On the contrary, there are many children in New Zealand schools whose educational opportunities are limited due to the lack of support from whanau and family. These children fail to attend school regularly, they fail to go on excursions, they fail to join team sports or cultural groups, they often don't have anyone who attends school meetings or interviews. This puts a child in a side-lined situation within the school community. Furthermore, there are many children who are not part of the wider community, remaining isolated and operating within a small, insular sub-groups within our societal communities. Full involvement in education is the only way this can change in the long term.

Education, from a very young age, must be a desired outcome. The proposed strategy does not reflect a long-term commitment to empowering children with the tools to achieve well-being. Whanau, food and shelter are undoubtedly essential but the tools to manage these, maintain them and achieve them are provided through education.

Education is not just about providing qualifications to gain a job but also include social skills, organisational skills, provide community values and communication skills – both written and verbal. Without this package being given to each child and nurtured throughout their school years they limit their opportunity to succeed.

- Desired outcome “*Children and young people are empowered to make age appropriate decisions, and ...*”: BPW NZ believes that best time to start this education process with parents is when the child is a pre-schooler. More recognition on the value of early childhood for both the child and their parent(s) is essential and needs to be part of this document.

Early childhood should be compulsory for 3 years of age and therefore fully funded and provided by the government as part of the education sector. This would mean EC Centres would no longer be profitable business for individuals or organisations and EC teachers would have pay equity with their primary counterparts.

- Desired outcome “*Children and young people develop resilience, and emotional, behavioural...*”. Too many children arrive at school lacking social competency skills because they have been raised in front of the television or mobile device. The school environment is foreign to them as it their ability to work within a group or follow routines etc. They are

immediately on 'the back-foot' in a class of peers who have had 2-3 years of early childhood education. Statistics support this statement<sup>1</sup>.

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" Nelson Mandela*

We support the Principles but would like to see mentioned that 'every child has the right to education' and recommend that in Principle 6 with the United Nations Conventions specific reference to the Sustainable Development Goals as well.

It is essential to the achievement of this strategy that it is not just considered in isolation. We recommend that a **whole-of-government** and **whole-of-society** approach should be expressed, to ensure that the strategy is supported from every angle. This requires for example that there should be specific assessment of the impact of all government policy and legislation on the wellbeing of all children and young people.

We recommend that **evidence-based** approaches to be implemented and clearly stated in the strategy to ensure evaluating new approaches as well as assessing current systems and programmes.

That **new ways of measurement** will be required to know where the gaps between our children and young peoples current wellbeing and the desired outcomes, and outcome equity. This requires a commitment to not only rely on what is currently measured, but to improve the clarity with which we see the wellbeing of children and young people, and to monitor progress and provides New Zealand an unprecedented opportunity to benchmark our progress against the Sustainable Development Goals.

We support the foundational role of the Treaty of Waitangi, and suggest that it should include mention of protection and participation as well as partnership as all elements are important. As New Zealanders we value our growing ethnic diversity. We also suggest to include considerations to commitment to the values of multiculturalism and promotion of inclusiveness.

The Child Poverty Reduction Bill which requires the development of a national Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy is the overarching framework we need. We look forward to Child Poverty Reduction Bill becoming law and the finalisation of details of the Child and Youth Strategy.

### **BPW NZ Policy that relates to this submission**

7.16 Extension of It's not OK Campaign

12.0 Education

14.4.7 Income Splitting for Tax Purposes

14.8.3 Employer's Provision of Childcare

15.22 Cochlea Implants

15.31 Protection of Children in Hospital

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<sup>1</sup> Te Whariki and Brainwave Foundation for details and EC Council, 'Children experience best development in their first 1000 days' safe and positive pregnancy, birth and responsible parenting. Early childhood education also fits in here. The first 1000 days is from conception to age 3 years. These are the key years of brain development and emotional wellbeing. Both can be nurtured through early childhood education alongside the whanau/ family'.

16.7 (a,b) Section 59 Crimes Act

16.16 Increased Funding for Grandparents/Kin/Whanau Raising

17.0 Status of Women

18.5.2 Protection Orders

18.7 Domestic Violence Act - Protected Persons

19.2 Housing

19.18 Tightening of the Broadcasting Standards Authority

**BPW International Policy includes**

- The Sustainable Development Goals and particularly the following that relate to child and youth wellbeing: SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG10 Reduced Inequalities, SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Joint Initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principals (WEPs): Principle 2 (f)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child

**International Status**

BPW International has General Consultative Status at the United Nations through the UN Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC). This enables BPW International to appoint official representatives to UN agencies worldwide and to accredit members to attend specific UN meetings.

BPW International upholds the outcomes of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee at state party level. BPW International upholds the outcome documents of the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which evaluates progress, identifies challenges, sets global standards and formulates policies to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment worldwide.

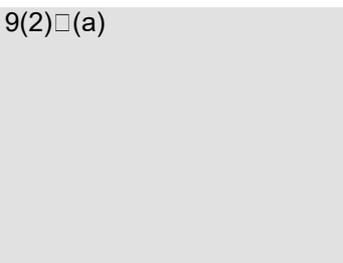
**We wish to speak to this submission if the opportunity arises.**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to our submission and we hope that our comments are of use to you.

On behalf of

New Zealand Federation of Business and professional Women Inc.

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