



## 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.

An external party holds copyright on this material and therefore its re-use cannot be licensed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.



## 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>	YMCA North (YMCA Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty)
<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?)	<p>YMCA North is part of a national and international YMCA brand that operates to a federate model. We are the largest NZ YMCA and local YMCA to Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty (with over 20 centres covering these communities).</p> <p>We offer a variety of services and programmes to children, young people and their families, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation (travel/tourism sector)</li> <li>• Early Learning Centres</li> <li>• Recreation facilities and activities e.g. gymnastics</li> <li>• Outdoor camps</li> <li>• Aquatic facilities and Swim programmes</li> <li>• OSCAR and Holiday Programme services</li> <li>• Fitness</li> <li>• Youth programmes e.g. Raise Up</li> </ul>

**Executive Summary:**

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

We are a charity that believes in ***strong kids, strong families and strong communities***. Our vision is ***Youth Empowerment and Healthy Living for All***.

We are proudly Aotearoa's first and currently only safeguarding accredited organisation. We believe a significant factor of child wellbeing is their safety and this should be within children's workforce services and communities, as well as within the child's home.

Sadly NZ is still way behind in having clear mandatory safeguarding requirements upon organisations that drive settings recognise this as shared responsibility for everybody. This bill and strategy implementing safeguarding and child protection requirements on the children's workforce and community members will we believe support children's wellbeing.

## Submission Content

We are a charity that believes in **strong kids, strong families and strong communities**. Our vision is **Youth Empowerment and Healthy Living for All**. We are proudly Aotearoa's first and currently only, safeguarding accredited organisation. This endorsement comes via our working partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) and is a public reflection of YMCA going above current NZ requirements and promoting best practice in safeguarding undertakings.

We believe a key component to Aotearoa being the best place for a child is Aotearoa being a safe place for a child and their safety must always align to the paramouncy principle. YMCA, other NGO's, universal services and many more sectors/services collectively form significant parts of the communities serving our regions children, young people and their families. Children/young people need to be safe within these environments, as much as they need to be safe within their homes and whānau.

Measures captured in the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 relating to Child Protection Policies and Safer Recruitment are important. However, these are just isolated factors that contribute towards a safeguarding culture and are only truly effective, if their implementation and effectiveness, is in some form measured and evaluated e.g firmly embedded in service provision audit processes, funding criteria, etc.

The current safeguarding and child protection requirements on the children's workforce are basic in establishing a safe environment and lack clear accountable monitoring and evaluation structures, with many at best meeting obligations in a tick box manner.

Part of children's wellbeing should be their rights to safety being observed and promoted. YMCA would welcome the bill and strategy driving mandatory responsibilities on all organisations/services working with/for children/young people and their whānau to have stronger safeguards in place, driving organisations to reflect a safeguarding culture. Considerations should be given to factors such as:

- *Requirements on services to establish a commitment and culture towards safeguarding and child protection that encompasses their role and responsibilities in working to prevent vulnerability, abuse and/or neglect, by either offering early intervention and/or working as part of multi-agency structures supporting specialist services such as Oranga Tamariki/Police, etc.*
- *In addition to Child Protection Policy requirements, have mandatory training requirements certifying all staff skilled in identify vulnerability and reporting abuse and/or neglect concerns.*
- *Are operating a safe workforce that has clear requirements in the safer recruitment of ALL people working/engaging with children/young people e.g. police vetting requirements against volunteers are currently advocated.*
- *The children's workforce having clarity on what may constitute an allegation against a staff member (as opposed to complaints), guidance noting expected practice in managing allegations and specific agencies/resources to work when managing allegations particularly those of concern but not necessarily criminal.*

- *Requirements on incident management process that will evidence their meeting of safeguarding and wellbeing roles and responsibilities.*
- *Driving practice to be truly child centred with the child's voice being captured and reflected within the organisations underakings.*
- *Both families and services being able to gain access to specailist support structures for children/young people with additional needs (e.g. mental health, behavioural challenges, etc.) that will assist enabling their ongoing engagement with community services (such as YMCA), as well as from an organisational perspective limit the risk of their needs, impacting on other customers/children, etc.*

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.