

25 May 2018

Submission on the *Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill*

Thank you for the opportunity for Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) to provide a submission on the *Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill*. We would welcome an opportunity to appear before select committee on this issue.

The following submission represents the views of ARPHS and does not necessarily reflect the views of the three district health boards it serves. Please refer to Appendix 1 for more information on ARPHS.

The primary contact point for this submission is:

Senior Policy Analyst

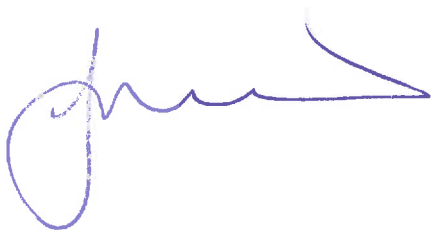
Dr Nicky Welch

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

021 811 465

nwelch@adhb.govt.nz

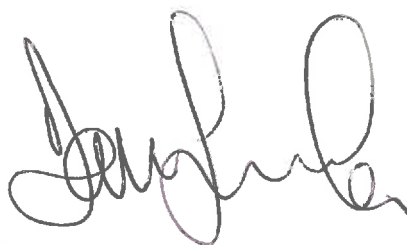
Yours sincerely,



Jane McEntee

General Manager

Auckland Regional Public Health Service



Dr David Sinclair

Medical Officer of Health

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Thank you for the opportunity for Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) to provide a submission on *Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill*.

ARPHS supports the *Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill* and our organisation supports:

- the changes proposed in Part 1 of the Bill to reinstate the focus on social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing, as specified in the Bill.
- the changes proposed in Part 2 of the Bill to modify the territorial authorities' power to collect developmental contributions for public amenities, as specified in the Bill.

Introduction

1. We commend the overall strategic intent of the *Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill* and support the focus on social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities.
2. In 2012 changes were made to the Local Government Act 2002. ARPHS made a submission opposing the removal of the mandated role for local government to promote the four wellbeings.
3. During the preparation of this submission, ARPHS has had discussions with both Auckland Council and Local Government New Zealand.
4. ARPHS considers that there have been a number of advantages from including social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing in the framework for Auckland's spatial planning under the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009. These include:
 - Explicit consideration in Council planning of the four wellbeings in plans.
 - Cross-sector consultation which, while essential to addressing complex issues, might otherwise have been left out or down-played.
 - Auckland Council being able to lead, or be involved in, important community wellbeing topics which are outside the narrow scope in the current legislation, including responses to homelessness.
 - Cross-agency collaborative programmes such as Healthy Auckland Together and the Safe Swim programme (see case studies below).
5. ARPHS considers that consistency in the purpose and scope of local government is warranted nationally.

Local government and wellbeing

6. Promoting wellbeing is at the heart of local government. The core functions of local government contribute to wellbeing through improving employment and the economy, ensuring clean water, planning and caring for the built and natural environment, providing access to green spaces, delivering public transport, championing active transport and supporting opportunities for physical activity.

7. Strong and empowered local government is a precursor to supporting communities and delivering integrated services. Incremental reform to the Local Government Act 2002 has introduced ambiguity over the role of Councils and decreased opportunities for citizens to take part in local democracy.
8. The restoration of the four wellbeings proposed by this Bill will allow an expansion of local government's purpose. Prominence of the wellbeings will enable territorial authorities to monitor, enact policy, develop partnerships and allocate resources to improve intergenerational wellbeing and focus action on those unfairly disadvantaged by the circumstances where they live, learn, work and play.

Wellbeing in Auckland

9. Our organisation's experience of partnering and collaborating with Auckland Council provides evidence for how local government can, and should, play an essential and cost-effective role in improving population wellbeing. The two cases studies on page 4 highlight examples of this collaborative work to improve community wellbeing.
10. Auckland Council's 10-year budget 2018-2028 and Auckland Plan 2050 highlight their desire to achieve an inclusive Auckland and advance Māori wellbeing. Māori living in Auckland experience negative health, social and economic outcomes at a disproportionately higher rate in comparison to the general population. Having a broader purpose to local government that promotes community wellbeing may impact positively on Māori.

Sustainability

11. We commend using a sustainable development approach outlined in Part 1, section 4 of the Bill. Local government has an important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at a local level. A sustainable development approach needs to be broader than the sustainable management framework in the Resource Management Act.

Development contributions

12. ARPHS supports the changes proposed in Part 2 of the Bill to modify the territorial authorities' power to collect development contributions for public amenities. The sports grounds, swimming pools and libraries created by this change will enhance community wellbeing.
13. Our organisation advocates for robust resourcing of the implementation of this proposed legislation.
14. There are important links between reinstating the four wellbeings in the Local Government Act and Treasury's Living Standards Framework, as it broadens the scope and definitions of progress and success from the current narrow economic measures. The Budget 2019 will report the nation's annual progress indicators that highlight the health and wellbeing of our people, our environment and our communities. Restoration of the four wellbeings for local government will align well with the central government definitions of improving prosperity.

Case Study 1: Healthy Auckland Together

Healthy Auckland Together is a coalition of 26 organisations representing local government, mana whenua, health agencies, NGOs, university and consumer interest groups.

Addressing the broad drivers of obesity, inactivity and ill health in society can be more effective than asking individuals to change their behaviour.

By working together to change policy, infrastructure design and planning, our environments can encourage physical activity and good nutrition. This means looking across the whole system - transport, urban planning, food supply and retail, education and business, so that all Aucklanders benefit.

Auckland Council and the council-controlled organisations, Auckland Transport and Watercare, are a key part of Healthy Auckland Together's work.

Find out more: www.healthyaucklandtogether.org.nz

Case Study 2: Safeswim

Safeswim provides water quality forecasts and up-to-date information on risks to health at 84 beaches and eight freshwater locations around Auckland. Safeswim is led by Auckland Council, with contributions from Watercare, Surf Lifesaving Northern Region and the Auckland Regional Public Health Service.

Find out more: <https://www.safeswim.org.nz/>

Conclusion

15. Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the *Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill*.
16. We welcome an opportunity to appear before select committee on this issue.

Appendix 1 - Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) provides public health services for the three district health boards (DHBs) in the Auckland region (Counties Manukau Health and Auckland and Waitemata District Health Boards).

ARPHS has a statutory obligation under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities in the Auckland region. The Medical Officer of Health has an enforcement and regulatory role under the Health Act 1956 and other legislative designations to protect the health of the community.

ARPHS' primary role is to improve population health. It actively seeks to influence any initiatives or proposals that may affect population health in the Auckland region to maximise their positive impact and minimise possible negative effects on population health.

The Auckland region faces a number of public health challenges through changing demographics, increasingly diverse communities, increasing incidence of lifestyle-related health conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes, infrastructure requirements, the balancing of transport needs, and the reconciliation of urban design and urban intensification issues.