



## Proactive Release

The following Cabinet papers, related Cabinet minutes and briefings have been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, on behalf of Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Minister for Child Poverty Reduction:

Adopting the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

Briefings relating to indicators for the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

Date of release: 20 November 2019

The following documents have been included in this release:

***Cabinet Paper: Adopting the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy  
(CAB-19-SUB-0085)***

***Cabinet Minute: Adopting the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy  
(CAB-19-MIN-0085)***

***Briefing: Update on the Indicators for the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy  
(DPMC-2018/19-1107)***

***Briefing: Proposed Indicators for the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy  
(DPMC-2018/19-1195)***

***Briefing: Proposed Indicators for the Strategy and Child Poverty Related Indicators  
(DPMC-2018/19-1294)***

***Briefing: Final Suite of Indicators and measures for inclusion in Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (DPMC-2019/20-27)***

Some parts of this information release would 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 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 code:

- 9(2)(a): to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

In Confidence

Office of the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

Office of the Minister for Children

Chair, Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## **ADOPTING THE CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING STRATEGY**

### **Proposal**

1. This paper seeks your endorsement to adopt New Zealand's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy) and to publish the Strategy and Government Programme of Action (appended as Attachments A and B). Consistent with the requirements of the Children's Act 2014 (the Children's Act), key elements of the Strategy have been subject to consultation with children, young people, and Māori as part of a widespread programme of engagement. Formal consultation with the Children's Commissioner and the Minister for Māori Development on the Strategy has also been undertaken in accordance with the Children's Act.
2. We seek delegated authority to approve the final Strategy and Government Programme of Action for publication, making any minor amendments as necessary.
3. Note that further policy work is required to support actions in some areas of the Strategy. We propose that officials report back to Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (the Committee) by 31 October 2019 with detailed plans and options to progress work in each of these areas, including any implications for Budget 2020.

### **Executive Summary**

4. The Children's Act, as amended by the Children's Amendment Act 2018, requires the Government to develop and publish a child wellbeing strategy by 21 December 2019.
5. A draft Strategy and Government Programme of Action have been prepared which take into account public and expert views. Between October 2018 and late January 2019, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) undertook public and targeted engagement on the outcomes framework and policy priorities for the Strategy. In partnerships with the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Oranga Tamariki, and Te Puni Kōkiri, targeted consultation was undertaken with children and Māori, as required by the Children's Act. The Ministry of Health also facilitated engagement focussed on what changes were required in the health sector to improve child and youth wellbeing.
6. The proposed Strategy builds on earlier advice considered by Cabinet [CAB-18-MIN-0449.01 refers] and includes:
  - 6.1. a vision – *New Zealand is the best place in the world for children and young people;*
  - 6.2. a set of nine principles to guide how actions taken are consistent with the Strategy, reflecting the values New Zealanders have said are most important, the requirements

of the Children's Act, and other commitments such as Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention)

6.3. six multi-dimensional wellbeing outcomes sought for children and young people, where all children and young people:

- are loved, safe, and nurtured
- have what they need
- are happy and healthy
- are learning and developing
- are accepted, respected and connected
- are involved and empowered

6.4. an outline of how the six outcomes will be measured, including the indicators and measures.

7. The proposed Strategy includes policies and actions that focus on addressing the most pressing needs for children and young people. These policies and actions, set out in more detail in the Government Programme of Action, reflect priority areas across the health, education and social sectors, and incorporate the new initiatives included in Budget 2019. To maintain momentum, we propose that officials monitor and report at six-monthly intervals to this Committee on implementation progress. The Social Wellbeing Board will have governance and oversight of the implementation.
8. Further work to improve child and youth wellbeing is required, including cross-agency policy work on: reducing child poverty; mitigating socio-economic disadvantage; tackling racism, discrimination, and stigma; advancing child wellbeing for those aged 0-6 years old, particularly in the first 1,000 days; and extending whānau-centred approaches to improve child and youth wellbeing. We propose that officials report to this Committee by 31 October 2019 with detailed plans and options for additional actions, informed by evidence of effectiveness and including any Budget 2020 implications.
9. The six outcomes identified in the Strategy will also act as the outcomes for action plans under development. The Oranga Tamariki Action Plan is required under the Children's Act to be established by the chief executives of the children's agencies, following the adoption of the Strategy. A Youth Action Plan is also being led by the Minister for Youth to ensure youth voices and issues are heard and acted on across Government to help achieve the Strategy's outcomes.
10. Once endorsed by Cabinet and formally adopted by the responsible Minister, the first Strategy will be gazetted and published online, consistent with the requirements of the Children's Act.

## Background

11. The Children's Act, as amended by the Children's Amendment Act 2018, requires successive governments to develop and adopt a child wellbeing strategy. The Government is required by law to publish the first children's wellbeing strategy by 21 December 2019.
12. In May 2018, Cabinet agreed that the child wellbeing strategy will provide an overarching framework for central government policy development, and become the basis for public reporting and accountability on how New Zealand children are faring against a set of the agreed wellbeing outcomes. Cabinet agreed to the broad framing of child wellbeing; initial

proposals for a vision statement; and a proposed set of outcomes sought for all children and organised into five domains. Cabinet also agreed to an indicative list of 16 focus areas proposed for policy work to inform the Child Wellbeing Strategy, with cross-agency exploratory policy work to be undertaken on six priorities [SWC-18-MIN-0049 refers]:

- 12.1. child poverty is reduced, in line with the Government's intermediate and ten-year targets
  - 12.2. children experience optimal development in their first 1,000 days: safe and positive pregnancy, birth and parenting (conception to around two years)
  - 12.3. children are thriving socially, emotionally and developmentally in the early years (two to six years)
  - 12.4. children are safe and nurtured, in their whānau and their homes
  - 12.5. children's mental wellbeing is supported
  - 12.6. children are free from racism, discrimination, and stigma.
13. In September 2018, Cabinet agreed to a proposed outcomes framework as a basis for more substantive public engagement, including consultation with children and young people and Māori to inform the development of the Strategy [CAB-18-MIN-0449.01 refers]. At that time, Cabinet confirmed the areas for policy work over time, with the short-term policy work on the six priorities to be prioritised for Budget 2019 proposals, where they were investment ready.

#### **Scope and content of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy**

14. The proposed Strategy has been informed by widespread public engagement. It sets out an overarching framework to improve child and youth wellbeing that can be used by anyone. The framework is made up of a vision, six child and youth wellbeing outcomes, guiding principles, and indicators with measures to know we are making a difference. The framework provides a shared understanding and tools for everyone working on child and youth wellbeing. It has the potential to drive and align policy, efforts and investments inside and outside of government.
15. The scope of the Strategy has been extended, as a result of engagement, to cover all children and young people under the age of 25 years, which is about 1.6 million people or 33 percent of New Zealand's population.
16. The proposed Strategy also includes a set of Government policies and actions, including those funded through Budget 2019 which have been informed by evidence of expected effectiveness in achieving the outcomes sought. The policies and actions are intended to prevent or minimise negative social outcomes for children and young people. The effectiveness of these policies must be evaluated over time.
17. The proposed Strategy and its associated Government Programme of Action meet the requirements of the Children's Act including that a Strategy set outcomes and identify policies to be implemented to address:
  - 17.1. improving the wellbeing of all children
  - 17.2. improving, as a particular focus, the wellbeing of children with greater needs
  - 17.3. reducing child poverty and mitigating impacts of child poverty and of socio-economic disadvantage experienced by children

- 17.4. improving the wellbeing of the core populations of interest to the department [Oranga Tamariki] (namely, children with early risk factors for future statutory involvement, those who the department works with, and care-experienced children).
18. Children living in poverty and disadvantaged circumstances, and those children and young people of interest to Oranga Tamariki have taken precedence in this first Strategy. Consultation feedback reinforced the need to focus particular attention to the needs of those groups now. Longitudinal data indicates they have significantly worse wellbeing than other children and young people and the research clearly points to long-term, intergenerational negative impacts if this is not changed.
19. Early work on the six priorities has been prominently reflected in decisions for Budget 2019. This includes:
- 19.1. early work on establishing our medium-term approach to child poverty reduction, including setting targets, announcing funding in Budget 2019 and bringing a child poverty focus to the overhaul of the welfare system
  - 19.2. key steps in addressing family and sexual violence, including additional funding to the sector in the Budget and the establishment of the joint venture and corresponding business unit
  - 19.3. a series of investments to improve the wellbeing of children and young people in State care and youth justice settings, as part of the Oranga Tamariki operating model changes
  - 19.4. investments to improve child and youth mental wellbeing as part of our response to *He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction*
  - 19.5. investments in learning support and in the teaching workforce to advance learning and development opportunities for children.
20. Your endorsement is sought to adopt and publish this Strategy over the next few weeks.

#### **Further policy work to advance the Strategy**

21. The Strategy provides a strong policy platform on which to build. We propose that further policy work, with an emphasis on the design of future actions to be taken, is progressed by officials in five key areas:
- 21.1. reducing child poverty
  - 21.2. mitigating socio-economic disadvantage
  - 21.3. tackling racism, discrimination, and stigma
  - 21.4. advancing child wellbeing for those aged 0-6 years, particularly in the first 1,000 days
  - 21.5. extending whānau-centred approaches to improve child and youth wellbeing.
22. Each of these areas for further work is discussed below. All of the above, except for our approach to reducing child poverty, require more policy work on problem definitions and the identification of effective, evidence informed options to address the issues. It is expected that officials will report back to the Committee by 31 October 2019 with detailed plans and options to progress, and any implications for Budget 2020.

### *Reducing child poverty*

23. The Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018 requires the government of the day to set long-term (10-year) and intermediate (3-year) targets on a set of child poverty measures against which the government must report annually.
24. Child poverty reduction requires immediate action as well as longer-term systemic shifts. The system-shifts that the government is working to achieve are:
  - 24.1. continued economic growth, improved productivity, and increased wages, which needs to occur in a way that sees employment opportunities and real wage growth for working households at the bottom of the income distribution
  - 24.2. a social 'welfare safety net' that ensures people have an adequate income and, where appropriate, supports people into sustainable, adequately paid employment;
  - 24.3. changes to income support settings to lift the living standards for the lowest income households, especially those households with children and young people
  - 24.4. enabling the housing market to deliver more affordable housing, making life better for renters, and ensuring that quality, affordable housing is available for those on the lowest incomes
  - 24.5. improvements to the in-kind assistance available to low-income families, and reductions in the demands on household budgets – particularly for essentials like food, energy, transport, and for services critical to child and youth outcomes
  - 24.6. a reduction in problem debt, through a focus on harmful lending practices, and improved coordination across government.
25. Reducing child poverty now means taking action to increase the material resources available to households – by increasing incomes, and reducing housing costs and other demands on household budgets. The Strategy and the Government Programme of Action outline the steps we are already taking. Considering how to further our approach to reducing child poverty in the context of work to overhaul the welfare system will be particularly important.

### *Mitigating the impact of socio-economic disadvantage*

26. It is vital that we take an intergenerational perspective, and help break cycles of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. Children and young people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage will need more help to achieve equity in outcomes with other children and young people. We are making changes to improve our system of services and support for children, young people, their families and their whānau, and our approaches to addressing the complex factors that can lead to intergenerational poverty. This means:
  - 26.1. reviewing key aspects of our universal services in health and education, to address barriers to access, make them easier to navigate, and more responsive to the needs of children, young people, their families and their whānau
  - 26.2. introducing or extending a number of programmes that strengthen skills, capabilities and resilience amongst families in disadvantaged communities, or which increase the intensity and suitability of the services provided. Changes are also being made to the way additional resources are targeted to schools to improve educational equity for all children.
27. Officials will continue to work across the relevant agencies to identify opportunities to improve our mitigation of socio-economic disadvantage. Progress will be reported on to the Committee by 31 October 2019, including any implications for Budget 2020.

### *Tackling racism, discrimination and stigma*

28. The Ministries of Education and Justice have been leading work in this area. Officials from these agencies have been working with sector based groups to better understand the issues faced and to identify appropriate ways forward to address them. Engagement, including with children and young people, has identified that:
  - 28.1. Racism, discrimination and stigma are widely felt and transmitted
  - 28.2. the research indicates the importance of considering the impact of racism and discrimination throughout society and in institutional settings
  - 28.3. there is a social, cultural and economic risk of not addressing discrimination with urgency
  - 28.4. lasting change requires long-term commitment, resources and effort to change systems and to change the behaviours of New Zealanders.
29. Work to date has identified a series of system shifts are required. These include the need to:
  - 29.1. ensure spaces are safe, supportive and inclusive
  - 29.2. build an understanding of racism and discrimination, power and privilege
  - 29.3. transform the way government operates to deliver equity.
30. Officials intend to progress further work over the coming months, with a focus on identifying suitable policies or initiatives for consideration as part of Budget 2020.

### *Advancing child wellbeing for 0-6 year olds, with a particular focus on the first 1,000 days*

31. The Ministries of Health, Education, Social Development, Justice and Oranga Tamariki have been leading this work with the Child Wellbeing Unit. Initially the work was focused in three areas: the first 1,000 days, 2-6 year olds, and ensuring children are safe and nurtured in their whānau and their homes. Officials have brought these work streams together to ensure a more cross-sectoral focus on improving child wellbeing in the early years.
32. There are also a number of related system-level reviews and work underway – in particular the reviews of maternity and Well Child Tamariki Ora services, the Early Learning Strategic Plan, the Learning Support Action Plan, the development of the Early Intervention function in Oranga Tamariki and the multi-year work programme to overhaul the welfare system.
33. Together these provide a timely opportunity to look at the system of early years support for children and their families and whānau as a whole. Positive, nurturing environments for children early in life lay the foundations for good wellbeing across the life course. We need to look across health, education, and other social sector agencies, and to consider how to simplify the system, improve equity of outcomes and make it more active in reaching all children and young people. We need to improve the current proportionate universal approach, embed whānau-centred thinking, and establish a single system of measurement and assessment. We need to incorporate a life-course approach, and ensure children, their families and whānau receive the right level of support at the right time from the antenatal period onwards.
34. An investment strategy for parenting, family and whānau support is needed to better coordinate services across government agencies and align them to the outcomes in the Strategy. Effective services can be scaled up. Officials intend to progress further cross-sectoral work over the coming months, with a focus on identifying suitable policies or initiatives for consideration as part of Budget 2020.

### *Extending whānau-centred approaches to improve child and youth wellbeing*

35. The Children's Act requires children and young people to be viewed in the context of their families, whānau, hapū, and iwi, other culturally recognised family groups, and communities. A principle has been introduced to the child and youth wellbeing framework to guide implementation of the Strategy with that requirement in mind.
36. Public engagement identified taking a whānau-centred approach as one way that those responsible for the wellbeing of children, particularly Māori and Pacific children and young people, can give effect to the Strategy's principles. Cabinet has previously considered whānau-centred approaches in February 2019, when it noted *The Whānau Ora Review Report: Tipu Mātoro ki te Ao*, which affirmed the Whānau Ora commissioning approach [CAB-18-MIN-0120 refers].
37. The report contained recommendations to extend the reach of Whānau Ora, which Te Puni Kōkiri is leading. In extending the Whānau Ora approach across government agencies, opportunities may arise for more effective approaches to the delivery of services to children and young people in the context of their whānau. Te Puni Kōkiri will work alongside the children's agencies to identify any opportunities and will update this Committee, via the Social Wellbeing Board, on progress by 31 October 2019, including on any Budget 2020 implications.

### **Public engagement on the Strategy**

38. Between October 2018 and late January 2019, DPMC, in partnership with other agencies, undertook a process of widespread public engagement on the development of the Strategy. Participants included children and young people, local government, health sector representatives and non-government organisations, Māori, Pacific peoples, diverse and rural communities. Targeted consultation on the proposed outcomes framework and key policy priorities took place with children and young people and Māori consistent with the requirements of the Children's Act section 6D(1).
39. Input about what was needed to improve children's wellbeing was received through surveys, written submissions, "postcards to the Prime Minister", and through face-to-face and small group meetings. More than 10,000 people, including more than 6,000 children and young people, contributed their ideas. Overall, feedback on the proposed outcomes framework and areas for policy development was positive. Reports summarising the feedback from consultation have been published online.
40. There was a clear sense through the public engagement that people saw the Strategy as a unique opportunity for Government leadership to make transformational changes to lift the wellbeing of all. There was recognition that these changes needed to be planned and rolled out carefully but, at the same time, some issues could not wait – there was a strong call for immediate actions for children, young people and families in greatest need now. These immediate actions have been reflected in our priorities for Budget 2019.
41. Public engagement indicated considerable accord between the six priority focus areas for improving child and youth wellbeing we had identified and the issues that New Zealanders consider to be the most pressing to address for children and young people in New Zealand. Key themes from engagement with different groups are set out below.



*Engagement with children and young people – led by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner in partnership with Oranga Tamariki*

42. The engagement identified the following themes for improving children and young people’s wellbeing:
  - 42.1 *Change is needed* - Almost all children and young people that shared their views, including those who said that they were doing well, could point to something that needed to change if all children and young people are to have a good life
  - 42.2 *Family and whānau are crucial* - Families must be well in order for children to be well, and families must be involved in making things better
  - 42.3 *The bare basics are not enough* - Intrinsic things such as feeling accepted, valued and respected are just as important as children and young people’s material needs. Children and young people want more than just a minimum standard of living
  - 42.4 *Schools have a significant impact* - Children and young people spend a lot of time at school and they have a major impact on children and young people’s wellbeing, for better or for worse
  - 42.5 *Communities have a part to play* - Government needs to recognise and support local community actions that help children and young people to thrive.
43. Through October and November 2018, 423 children and young people were spoken to face-to-face, through a series of focus groups, and in one-on-one interviews. An online survey was distributed through schools and on websites, which was completed by 5,631 children and young people.
44. The Office of the Children’s Commissioner and Oranga Tamariki completed an analysis of the findings from the face-to-face engagements, and the responses to the survey, and produced a summary report *What makes a good life? Children and young people’s views on wellbeing*.

*Engagement with Māori*

45. DPMC led broader engagement with Māori, including with Māori organisations. In addition to specific meetings with groups, a series of regional hui were run from November 2018 to late January 2019. Te Puni Kōkiri hosted 11 hui with DPMC in locations across New Zealand. Engagement with Māori children and young people occurred as part of the work done by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner and Oranga Tamariki. More than half (57 percent) of the 423 children and young people they spoke to in focus groups and interviews were Māori, and 27 percent of the 5,631 respondents to their online survey were Māori.
46. Māori raised common themes during engagement about what the framework and the Strategy needed to contain. These included:
  - 46.1. whānau and whānau-centred approaches to wellbeing should be central
  - 46.2. Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) must be at the heart of the work
  - 46.3. there should be a clear focus on equity
  - 46.4. issues of identity (including aspects of Māori identity and spirituality) should be made more visible.

47. Changes were made to the proposed outcomes framework to address the issues raised by Māori on the framework. These changes included:
- 47.1. revision of one of the principles to give greater emphasis to the importance of considering indigeneity in the Strategy and the Māori-Crown relationship as foundational
  - 47.2. the inclusion of an additional principle to recognise the holistic nature of wellbeing, as captured in the Māori models and frameworks of wellbeing that fed into the development of the Strategy
  - 47.3. providing greater clarity to a principle intended to acknowledge the importance of whānau to the wellbeing of Māori children and young people
  - 47.4. the inclusion of an additional principle to give greater recognition to the importance of addressing equity
  - 47.5. separating the 'children belong, contribute and are valued' domain into two outcome statements: 'Children and young people are accepted, respected and connected' and 'Children and young people are involved and empowered', to give more prominence to the importance of whakapapa, culture and identity in overall child and youth wellbeing
  - 47.6. the inclusion of outcome descriptors regarding supporting children and young people to exercise manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga
  - 47.7. the inclusion of an outcome description for children and young people to live free from racism and discrimination.

#### *Engagement with Pacific Peoples*

48. Input from Pacific peoples during engagement asked for more understanding of the "lived reality" of children and families from diverse Pacific communities. Many families engaged with indicated they were struggling to make ends meet. Feedback also referred to the need for continued acknowledgement of the diverse Pacific communities in New Zealand, their languages and cultures.
49. There was also feedback that the proposed outcomes framework needed to better support the recognition of faith and aspects of cultural identity as an important part of Pacific children and young peoples' wellbeing. Revisions to the principles now include one focused on holistic wellbeing, including the spiritual dimension of wellbeing. Changes to the proposed outcome children and young people are 'accepted, respected and connected' were made based on feedback from Pacific peoples to capture connections to beliefs, cultures and languages.
50. As part the public engagement process, officials worked with Pacific reference groups for a number of government agencies and engaged with Pacific leaders as part of other advisory groups. DPMC also partnered with the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, including to get feedback on the Strategy from those in attendance at its National Summit. DPMC also undertook specific engagement with small family groups, supported by Pasifika Futures in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch.

### *Other engagement*

51. The Ministry of Health, supported by DPMC and District Health Boards, held ten full-day workshops on the Strategy, which included a focus on what needed to change in the health sector to meet the outcomes for improving child and youth wellbeing. More than 700 health and community sector attendees participated in these workshops, and the health sector is working through changes to its practice utilising this feedback.
52. Through two of the Whānau Ora commissioning agencies, we held focus group discussions with navigators and whānau.
53. Some specific engagement was undertaken with some groups representing disability perspectives, rural communities, refugee and migrant communities and the LGBTQIA+ community. These groups experience poorer outcomes in some areas and changes were made to the outcomes framework to reflect their input.

### **Implementation**

54. We propose DPMC works alongside government agencies to maintain momentum on the implementation and progress monitoring of the Strategy and report regularly to the Social Wellbeing Board. The Social Wellbeing Board will continue to provide overall governance and oversight to the Strategy, with individual chief executives remaining accountable for the specific initiatives detailed in the Programme of Action. The Social Wellbeing Board will play a role in ensuring agencies increasingly align their activities for children and young people to the outcomes set by the Strategy. DPMC, via the Board, will provide updates to the Committee on progress every six months.
55. We would expect to see central government social sector agencies align to the Child and Youth Wellbeing framework in their Statements of Intent, business planning, accountability and investment documents.
56. Agencies implementing policies and actions under the Strategy will need to demonstrate through evaluation the effectiveness of their initiatives. The evaluation strategies used must be fit for purpose. There will be a need over time to address any gaps and overlaps in programmes and services intended to improve the wellbeing of children and young people, so systematic collection of robust information about how well the actions support the achievement of outcomes will be important.
57. This Strategy is intended to lead and align government action. However, there is considerable interest from, and scope for, local government, iwi, hapū, business, community and other non-government organisations to align their processes, policies and efforts. Many organisations at this level are already taking action. The Strategy will enable greater alignment across institutions, encouraging collective action and impact. DPMC will coordinate engagement with organisations outside of government, supporting them to understand and implement the Strategy appropriate to their circumstances.

### **Action plans**

58. After the Strategy is adopted, the Children's Act requires chief executives of children's agencies to work together to develop and publish an action plan (the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan). This plan will drive collective effort and accountability across children's agencies to improve the wellbeing outcomes for the children and young people of interest to Oranga Tamariki. Children's agencies are developing the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan over 2019.
59. A Youth Action Plan is also under development by the Minister for Youth, working across government to focus on issues identified as important by youth to achieve the Strategy's outcomes. The areas of focus will include: youth mental health, suicide prevention,

education, employment, housing and ensuring youth perspectives are captured in those work areas.

### **Measurement approach**

60. The Children's Act requires the Strategy to indicate the extent to which the outcomes are measurable and set out how the outcomes will be measured, including how disparities in outcomes will be measured for children in poverty and children experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. The measurement approach, and a set of indicators and measures, are set out in the Strategy. The first annual report on progress is required by 31 March 2021.
61. To assess the measurability of the Strategy's outcomes, the Social Investment Agency, with the support of officials from relevant government agencies, completed a review of a range of administrative, survey and other sources that contain potential indicators of child and youth wellbeing. This review found that there is a large number of existing indicators that align to outcomes in the Strategy and each outcome is measurable to some extent. However, there are also some significant gaps in the current measurability of the outcomes, particularly for children younger than 15 years of age and for subjective wellbeing. These gaps also exist in the Living Standards Framework and Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand.
62. The Strategy identifies 36 child and youth wellbeing indicators for measuring the outcomes. DPMC has worked with the Social Investment Agency, Statistics New Zealand, Departmental Science Advisors, and with agency experts to review the possible measures for inclusion. The Strategy notes that more detailed information on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Indicators will be published later this year.
63. The 36 child and youth wellbeing indicators have been selected to ensure good alignment with Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand. The Strategy also states that detailed reporting on the indicators should include analysis by socio-economic status (or best proxy available), ethnicity, and other demographic variables of significance wherever data is available. There is an expectation that the indicators will be built on and improved over time.
64. We will also supplement the child and youth wellbeing indicators with analysis from other data sources including the Children's Wellbeing Model, which provides a multi-dimensional and child-centric view of what is happening for all children in New Zealand. Together with the child and youth wellbeing indicators identified in the Strategy, this will enable greater understanding about the distributional aspects of wellbeing, including how wellbeing is changing for those children and young people whose needs are greatest.
65. Alongside the measurement work there is also evaluation activity. The Children's Act requires subsequent strategies to indicate what policies the Government has implemented since the last strategy, and any steps that the Government has taken to evaluate the effectiveness of those policies. Any new policies that the Government intends to implement under this Strategy will therefore need to be tested and evaluated for effectiveness. In addition to the monitoring and evaluation of individual initiatives in the Programme of Action, DPMC and the Social Investment Agency are currently developing plans for the evaluation of the Strategy as a whole.

### *Child Poverty Related Indicators*

66. The Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018 requires the Government Statistician to report on a suite of ten measures that will enable the Government to comprehensively monitor trends for child poverty, and ensure that governments are held to account for the policies they implement. Under the Child Poverty Reduction Act, the Minister must also identify one or

more indicators related to the causes, correlates, and/or consequences of child poverty ('Child Poverty Related Indicators', or 'CPRIs'). The reporting on the CPRIs is the responsibility of the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction, who must publish a dedicated 'monitoring report' for each financial year, alongside the report of the Government Statistician.

67. To ensure close alignment with the monitoring framework for the Strategy, we propose that the first set of CPRIs also be used as a subset of the Child and Youth Wellbeing indicators. We propose that measures of the following be formally identified in the Gazette:

- 67.1. housing affordability
- 67.2. housing quality
- 67.3. food insecurity
- 67.4. regular school attendance
- 67.5. avoidable hospitalisations.

68. To strengthen the link with children in poverty, the reporting on these outcomes will be broken out by household income or socio-economic status, so the social gradient can be observed. Disparities for a range of other outcomes will also be reported for various other domains as part of the wider suite of reporting, which will ensure a strong focus on the impacts of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. We seek your agreement to publish the monitoring report once it has been developed and finalised.

### **Treaty of Waitangi Implications**

69. The Children's Act gives practical effect to the Treaty of Waitangi by requiring consultation with Māori and by requiring reporting on outcomes for Māori children. Māori children and young people fare worse than others across almost every outcome area identified by the Strategy. The Strategy will only be successfully implemented when the outcomes for Māori children and young people improve significantly across all six wellbeing outcomes set in this Strategy.

70. Engagement with Māori on the proposed outcomes framework and the priorities for government action identified the need for the Treaty of Waitangi to be at the heart of the Strategy. As a result, a specific principle in the Strategy reflects Māori interests, as tangata whenua, and recognises the Māori-Crown relationship is foundational. In giving effect to this principle, government agencies will need to demonstrate an understanding of Māori needs and aspirations, consider children within the context of their whānau, co-design solutions with Māori where possible, support self-determination in the approach to improving wellbeing, respond in ways that support whānau and enable Māori children and young people to have the same opportunities as others, and to reach their full potential.

### **Publication of the Strategy**

71. Once endorsed by Cabinet and formally adopted by the responsible Minister, the Strategy will be published. Consistent with the requirements of the Children's Act, the Strategy will be available on the internet. Once the Strategy has been published, a Gazette notice will be issued referring to its publication and the relevant website.

72. A specific website [www.childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz](http://www.childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz) has been established to house the Strategy and associated material (A3s, summary version etc.). The website will act as a repository for information, news, stories and developments in child and youth wellbeing. The website will meet the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard and the Web

Usability Standard. Key information will also be made available in Easy Read and in different languages later this year. Any videos featuring on the website will be captioned.

73. The design concept to be used in the published Strategy is broadly based on the Māori metaphor of the harakeke as well as the tree of life concept and represents a child's ongoing connection with the earth and nature, as well as fun and play, and being nurtured to grow and be strong. *Whakatō te kākano aroha i roto i o tātou taitamariki kia puawai i roto i tō ratou tupuranga aranui oranga:* 'Plant the seed of love in our children and they will blossom, grow and journey towards the greatest pathway of life.' Leaf motifs are being used in a variety of ways, including for each of the wellbeing outcomes.
74. DPMC consulted on the early design concept with a number of children and young people. The response was generally very positive and the design elements were further refined to reflect their insights and suggestions.

### **Consultation**

75. The following agencies were consulted in the development of this paper: the Ministries of Business, Innovation and Employment, Education, Health, Justice, Social Development and Youth Development; the Joint Venture Business Unit; the Office for Disability Issues; the Ministries for Pacific Peoples, Women, Culture and Heritage, Housing and Urban Development; the Office of the Commissioner for Children; Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children; New Zealand Police; Te Arawhiti – the Office for Māori-Crown Relations; the Social Investment Agency; the Department of Corrections; the Department of Internal Affairs; the Accident Compensation Corporation, the State Services Commission; Statistics New Zealand; Te Puni Kōkiri; and the Treasury. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Prime Minister) was informed.
76. The Minister for Māori Development and the Children's Commissioner were specifically consulted as required by section 6D(1) of the Children's Act. The Children's Ministers and the Minister for Youth were also consulted on the proposed Strategy.

### **Financial Implications**

77. There are no immediate financial implications arising from the contents of this paper. The successful implementation of the Strategy will have ongoing fiscal impacts that will need to be considered in Budget 2020 and subsequent Budget processes.

### **Legislative Implications**

78. There are no specific legislative implications arising from the content of this paper.

### **Human Rights Implications**

79. The adoption of a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy is intended to support the full realisation of, and is therefore consistent with, the fundamental freedoms of children and young people that are recognised in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, the Human Rights Act 1993, and New Zealand's commitments to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
80. More broadly, the rights, interests and needs of children and young people will be brought into sharper focus across government and other sectors, as a result of this Strategy.
81. Consistent with good practice, a Child Impact Assessment was undertaken on the Strategy. The Child Impact Assessment indicates that effective implementation of the Strategy's

framework will have significant positive impacts on the wellbeing of children and young people.

### **Gender Implications**

82. Actions to improve the wellbeing of new mothers, support for parenting more generally, and addressing child poverty are likely to have positive benefits for many women, as they are more likely to be the primary caregivers of children and young people. Implications for mothers will be considered throughout the implementation of the Strategy. It is important for the Strategy's effective implementation that mothers can access the range of initiatives intended to benefit them.
83. Sole parent families have higher rates of child poverty and persistent material hardship, and women are approximately ten times more likely than men to be a sole caregiver for children and young people. The measures to address child poverty involve increased support to such caregivers.
84. Fathers play important roles in the wellbeing of their children and families. Support for fathers, particularly new parents, supports positive outcomes for children. In addition, taking whānau centred approaches to services through implementation of the Strategy can enable the needs of fathers to be met in the context of their children's wellbeing.
85. Careful consideration of existing or emerging priority areas that disproportionately affect either boys or girls is underway. For example, boys feature highly in youth justice, suicide and early educational disengagement and for girls, period poverty is an issue. Responses will be reflected in the initiatives in the Strategy as well as informing potential areas for further development.
86. Transgender children and young people, and those with diverse gender identities, can have particular wellbeing needs and face poor outcomes in some areas, including mental health. The focus of the Strategy on improving the wellbeing of children and young people with greater needs will help to address the disparities experienced by transgender and other gender-diverse children and young people.

### **Disability perspective**

87. The Strategy identifies the need to improve opportunities and outcomes for children and young people with disabilities as a key concern. There are strong equity and human rights reasons to ensure that the Strategy works for children and young people with disabilities and their whānau. To support this, the Strategy encourages:
  - 87.1. a focus on those children and young people with greater needs, ensuring universal services and supports are inclusive of, and accessible to, children and young people with disabilities;
  - 87.2. a focus on children and young people with disabilities in the context of their families and whānau and on the children of parents with disabilities, recognising the strong impact of disability on family economic wellbeing; and
  - 87.3. action to be taken on some of the long-term challenges experienced by children and young people with disabilities more than other population groups, particularly in finding meaningful employment and tackling discrimination and stigma.
88. As actions arising from the Strategy are implemented, the implications for disabled children and young people will be carefully considered to ensure their wellbeing is improved. Further work on the early years of a child's life and on tackling racism, discrimination, and stigma is

expected to have positive benefits for children with disabilities, their parents, their families and their whānau.

89. The Office for Disability Issues and other agencies are working to address the lack of current New Zealand data on children and young people with disabilities.

### Publicity

90. The Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of the Minister for Children will coordinate communications to support the publication of the Strategy.

### Proactive release

91. We intend to proactively release this Cabinet paper on the DPMC website, subject to any redactions appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982, following the public release of the Strategy.

### Recommendations

92. The Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and the Minister for Children recommend that the Committee:
- a) **Note** that the Children's Act 2014 requires the responsible Minister to adopt a strategy for improving the wellbeing of children by 21 December 2019;
  - b) **Note** that in May 2018, Cabinet agreed to the broad framing of child wellbeing for the purposes of public engagement, including a draft vision statement, a set of outcomes and an indicative list of 16 focus areas for further policy work [SWC-18-MIN-0049 refers];
  - c) **Note** that the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and the Minister for Children reported to Cabinet in September 2018 [CAB-18-MIN-0449.01 refers] with:
    - i. minor changes to the proposed framing of wellbeing, the vision statement, outcomes framework, and the long list of 16 focus areas for ongoing work as a result of early engagement, and
    - ii. a final set of initial focus areas, and the potential implications for Budget 2019 and the development of the first Child Wellbeing Strategy;
  - d) **Note** that widespread public engagement on the proposed Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy has been completed, including targeted consultation with children and young people and with Māori on the proposed vision, outcomes and policy priorities, meeting the requirements of section 6D(1) of the Children's Act 2014;
  - e) **Note** that changes have been made to the Strategy's framework and to the age range of young people covered by the Strategy following the engagement process;
  - f) **Note** that the responsible Minister has had regard to the relevant policy-related and child-related principles under the Children's Act 2014;
  - g) **Note** the Minister for Māori Development and the Children's Commissioner have been consulted on the proposed Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy as required by section 6D(1) of the Children's Act 2014;
  - h) **Endorse** the attached Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, including the Government Programme of Action, to be adopted by the responsible Minister, as required by the Children's Act 2014;



- i) **Note** that the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy will be published, subject to Cabinet endorsement and formal adoption by the responsible Minister, with a notice in the Gazette following publication;
- j) **Agree** to delegate authority to the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and the Minister for Children to finalise the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and the attached Government Programme of Action for publication;
- k) **Direct** officials to develop detailed plans and report back to the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee by 31 October 2019, on the following policy areas with the plans, including appropriate problem definitions and options, resource commitments, timelines for implementation, and whether funding will be required in Budget 2020:
- i. reducing child poverty
  - ii. mitigating socio-economic disadvantage
  - iii. tackling racism, discrimination, and stigma
  - iv. advancing child wellbeing for 0-6 year olds, with a particular focus on the first 1,000 days
  - v. extending whānau-centred approaches to improve child and youth wellbeing;
- l) **Note** the Minister for Youth Development will work with relevant Ministers to develop a Youth Action Plan to help achieve the outcomes in the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy;
- m) **Agree** to the Social Wellbeing Board providing governance and oversight for the implementation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, with the relevant chief executives retaining accountability for the delivery of specific initiatives;
- n) **Direct** officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to monitor the implementation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy as an overarching framework for child and youth policies and services and to report on a six-monthly basis, via the Social Wellbeing Board, to the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee;
- o) **Note** that the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction is required to formally identify one or more Child Poverty Related Indicators (for monitoring purposes) under the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018 on, or as close as reasonably practicable to, the date of the Strategy's first adoption;
- p) **Agree** that measures of the following be formally identified in the *New Zealand Gazette* as Child Poverty Related Indicators under the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018:
- i. housing affordability
  - ii. housing quality
  - iii. food insecurity
  - iv. regular school attendance
  - v. avoidable hospitalisations;
- q) **Note** that reporting on Child Poverty Related Indicators will initially occur as part of the wider reporting on measures of child wellbeing in late 2019, with the first dedicated Child Poverty Related Indicators monitoring report published in early 2020;
- r) **Agree** to delegate responsibility to the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction to publish the first Child Poverty Related Indicators monitoring report once it has been developed and finalised in early 2020; and

- s) **Agree** for this Cabinet paper to be proactively released, subject to any redactions appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982, following the public release of the Strategy.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

**Minister for Child Poverty Reduction**

Hon Tracey Martin

**Minister for Children**

Proactively released by the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction



# Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Adopting the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

**Portfolios**                      **Child Poverty Reduction / Children**

On 24 July 2019, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC):

- 1        **noted** that the Children's Act 2014 requires the responsible Minister to adopt a strategy for improving the wellbeing of children by 21 December 2019;
- 2        **noted** that in May 2018, SWC agreed to the broad framing of child wellbeing for the purposes of public engagement, including a draft vision statement, a set of outcomes and an indicative list of 16 focus areas for further policy work [SWC-18-MIN-0049];
- 3        **noted** that in September 2018, the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and the Minister for Children reported to Cabinet with:
  - 3.1       minor changes to the proposed framing of wellbeing, the vision statement, outcomes framework, and the long list of 16 focus areas for ongoing work as a result of early engagement; and
  - 3.2       a final set of initial focus areas, and the potential implications for Budget 2019 and the development of the first Child Wellbeing Strategy;

[CAB-18-MIN-0449.01]
- 4        **noted** that widespread public engagement on the proposed Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy) has been completed, including targeted consultation with children, young people, and with Māori on the proposed vision, outcomes and policy priorities, meeting the requirements of section 6D(1) of the Children's Act 2014;
- 5        **noted** that changes have been made to the Strategy's framework and to the age range of young people covered by the Strategy following the engagement process;
- 6        **noted** that the responsible Minister has had regard to the relevant policy-related and child-related principles under the Children's Act 2014;
- 7        **noted** that the Minister for Māori Development and the Children's Commissioner have been consulted on the proposed Strategy, as required by section 6D(1) of the Children's Act 2014;
- 8        **endorsed** the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy attached to the submission under SWC-19-SUB-0085, including the Government Programme of Action, to be adopted by the responsible Minister, as required by the Children's Act 2014;

- 9 **noted** that the Strategy will be published, subject to Cabinet's endorsement and formal adoption by the responsible Minister, with a notice in the Gazette following publication;
- 10 **authorised** the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and the Minister for Children to take decisions on the final text of the Strategy and Government Programme of Action, and to finalise the Strategy and Programme of Action for publication;
- 11 **directed** officials to report to SWC by 31 October 2019 on the following policy areas with detailed plans, including appropriate problem definitions and options, resource commitments, timelines for implementation, and whether funding will be required in Budget 2020:
- 11.1 reducing child poverty;
  - 11.2 mitigating socio-economic disadvantage;
  - 11.3 tackling racism, discrimination, and stigma;
  - 11.4 advancing child wellbeing for 0-6 year olds, with a particular focus on the first 1,000 days;
  - 11.5 extending whānau-centred approaches to improve child and youth wellbeing;
- 12 **noted** that the Minister for Youth Development will work with relevant Ministers to develop a Youth Action Plan to help achieve the outcomes in the Strategy;
- 13 **agreed** that the Social Wellbeing Board will provide governance and oversight for the implementation of the Strategy, with the relevant chief executives retaining accountability for the delivery of specific initiatives;
- 14 **directed** the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to monitor the implementation of the Strategy as an overarching framework for child and youth policies and services, and to report on a six-monthly basis, via the Social Wellbeing Board, to SWC;
- 15 **noted** that the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction is required to formally identify one or more Child Poverty Related Indicators (for monitoring purposes) under the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018 on, or as close as reasonably practicable to, the date of the Strategy's first adoption;
- 16 **agreed** that measures of the following be formally identified in the *New Zealand Gazette* as Child Poverty Related Indicators under the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018:
- 16.1 housing affordability;
  - 16.2 housing quality;
  - 16.3 food insecurity;
  - 16.4 regular school attendance;
  - 16.5 avoidable hospitalisations;
- 17 **noted** that reporting on Child Poverty Related Indicators will initially occur as part of the wider reporting on measures of child wellbeing in late 2019, with the first dedicated Child Poverty Related Indicators monitoring report published in early 2020;

- 18 **authorised** the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction to publish the first Child Poverty Related Indicators monitoring report once it has been developed and finalised in early 2020.

Gerrard Carter  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)  
Hon Dr David Clark  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Stuart Nash  
Hon Iain Lees-Galloway (part of item)  
Hon Jenny Salesa  
Hon Kris Faafoi  
Hon Tracey Martin  
Hon Peeni Henare  
Hon Willie Jackson  
Hon Aupito William Sio  
Hon Poto Williams  
Hon Julie Anne Genter  
Jan Logie, MP

**Hard-copy distribution:**

Minister for Child Poverty Reduction  
Minister for Children

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Office of the Chair  
Officials Committee for SWC

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