

10 November 2022

Dr Ganesh Nana, Chair
New Zealand Productivity Commission
PO Box 8036
Wellington 6143

Emailed to: [Productivity Commission | Make a submission](#)

Dear Dr Nana

Manawātū District Council submission on “A fair chance for all”

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the interim report of the Commission, “A fair chance for all.”

The Manawātū District Council (MDC) submits in support of the submission prepared by Taituarā.

MDC considers that greater centralisation by successive governments over the past four decades has been regressive, not progressive. MDC agrees with the Commissions’ findings that the siloed approach to service delivery by central government may be contributing to persistent disadvantage. For example, MDC is concerned that the centralisation of three waters service delivery into water service entities will complicate land-use decision-making and contribute to housing unaffordability.

MDC agrees with Taituarā that local government’s knowledge of, and connection to, local communities, and our role in promoting community wellbeing, means that we are uniquely placed to act as advocate on behalf of the community, or to design and deliver local services. Local Government is willing and able to deliver services within local communities – as long as there is central government financial assistance to do so. If local government received central government funding (i.e. an equitable share of the tax dollar) for community wellbeing service provision, we could ensure that the needs of our communities are better met by a tailored, local approach.

MDC considers that projects, services and opportunities designed and delivered at the local level, by local providers and in consultation with communities, are more likely to be successful and sustainable in the long-term than centralised ‘one-size-fits-all’ approaches. This is particularly true for rural and provincial communities like the Manawātū District which are often disproportionately impacted by centralised decision-making.

Many community wellbeing service providers have not seen funding increases by central government to meet their growing demands (e.g. increase in numbers of people requiring these services, especially in the mental health space, people with more complex issues, cost of living pressures, an ageing population, wage and salary increases).

MDC supports recommendation 3 in the submission by Taituarā that “the Commission recommend that central and local government put in place a joint model for intergenerational community planning or wellbeing, along the lines of the Community Wellbeing Plans described in *People Thriving in Place*.” MDC considers that such plans would be useful in improving communication and raising awareness of the needs of local communities. MDC agrees with Taituarā that local communities increasingly desire to have a greater say in the direction central government investment takes and in the design of local services.

MDC considers that the delivery of core services, including land use planning and provision of infrastructure, contribute to community wellbeing, including in the area of housing affordability. Ongoing consideration should be given as to what services should be ratepayer funded (i.e. delivered by local government) versus taxpayer funded (i.e. delivered by central government agencies).

MDC also agrees with Taituarā that there is a need for further investment in developing an agreed framework to assess wellbeing and equity and investment. The Mauri Ora approach described in the interim report is generally supported by MDC as an overarching framework for public policy. However, MDC requests that local government be consulted with in the development of any indicators framework developed to measure the state of wellbeing.

MDC’s Community Development Strategy (revised 1 July 2021) recognises that community wellbeing is about everyone working together to make communities a great place to grow up, grow old and everything in between.

Council’s Community Development Strategy states:

Tērā te karanga o te iwi, “Tēnā huakina ngā tatau o te whare kia tae ai taku tiro ki ngā taonga ā-roto”. Ko te whakahoki o te kaunihera ā-rohe o Manawatū, ko tēnei, “Kua tuwherahia ngā tatau ki a koutou katoa. Tomo mai ki tō tātou nei whare kia āhuru ai te noho. Nau piki mai, haere kake mai!”

The people call saying, “Open the doors of the house that I may see the gifts within”. Manawatū District Council responds, “The doors are open to you all. Enter into our house that your stay may be comfortable. Welcome and come on in!”

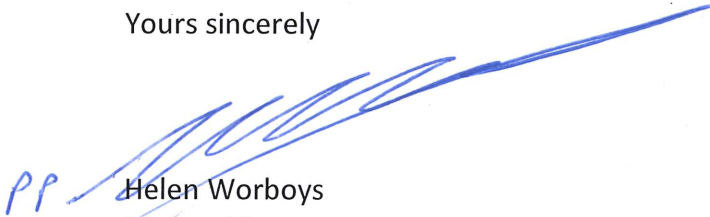
Examples of how the Manawatū District Council partners with the Manawatū community include:

- Through our Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO), the Manawatu Community Trust, we own the Feilding Health Care Centre. This is an integrated family health centre with over 25 clinical staff and 20,000 enrolled patients.
- The Manawatu Community Trust currently owns over 200 social housing units for seniors and disabled and has plans to grow its portfolio
- Council-funded Priority Service Contracts in areas like local NGO social service providers, surf lifesaving, neighbourhood support, community patrol, services for seniors, restorative justice programmes etc.
- Provision of community facilities that help reduce persistent disadvantage by giving all our residents the opportunity to engage, feel safe and connected and live a good life - including:

- our libraries and community hubs;
 - meeting places like the Civic Centre and Community Halls;
 - the Makino Aquatic Centre;
 - working with Horizons Regional Council to deliver public transport services; and
 - playgrounds and sportsgrounds.
- Council contracts Sport Manawatu to deliver an extensive programme right across the District and to all ages.

MDC thanks the Commission again for the opportunity to submit on this interim report.

Yours sincerely

PP 
Helen Worboys
Mayor, JP

