



TO: TO THE NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

RE: A FAIR CHANCE FOR ALL: BREAKING THE DISADVANTAGE CYCLE: SCOPING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN INQUIRY

FROM: CHALLENGE 2000 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY :

CONTACT: Steve O'Connor : [REDACTED] cell: [REDACTED]

DATE: 27 August 2021

He aha te huarahi? I runga I te tika, te pono me te aroha.

What is the pathway? It is doing what is right, with integrity and compassion.

Preface:

Challenge 2000, makes this submission to the New Zealand Productivity Commission (The Commission), based on our experience of working with some of the most disadvantaged, poorest citizens in our country, over the last 30 plus years.

We are making four submissions regarding the proposed Terms of Reference, that the commission wishes to formulate, to guide a new enquiry by the Commission, into, Breaking the Disadvantage Cycle.

Introduction: Challenge 2000

Challenge 2000 is a Wellington based youth development agency. Our mission to work with vulnerable youth and their families began in 1988. For thirty plus years, we have provided social work and community support services and have taken responsibility to uphold the fundamental rights and human dignity, of the most disadvantaged and marginalised young people and families. A significant proportion of those families and young people are Tangata Maori and Tagata Pasifika. Our families live in some of the poorest suburbs in the Greater Wellington region.

We work motivated by the belief that love, skilled support and professional care can lead to personal, familial and social transformation. We have always recognised that solutions are not easy and that partnerships and working together are critical factors for change and the formation of great citizens.

Over any year, our forty plus staff have ongoing contact with many hundreds of families. This contact occurs through; the schools we work in to provide social work and youth work services, our work in the community and through our work supporting people in the adult and youth Justice System.

Preamble:

The state has a positive moral function; it is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights and build the common good. The market, and the economy is but one means by which the Government of the day intervenes when necessary to carries out this function. If the poorest and most disadvantaged among us, have his or her basic needs meet, through the reform and restructuring of failing state institutions,

Challenge 2000 Trust • PO Box 13-059 • Johnsonville • Wellington 6440 • Aotearoa New Zealand

Contact • Tel 04 477 6827

Email • info@challenge2000.org.nz

www.challenge2000.org.nz

then the cycle of disadvantage will diminish among the few, and well-being and productivity will increase among all.

Challenge 2000 supported the Well-being priorities of the Budget Policy Statement 2021. In a submission to the Finance and Expenditure select committee Challenge 2000 acknowledged that, the Budget Policy statement 2021 Well-being priorities addressed some inequities experienced by the poorest and most disadvantaged.

We acknowledge that the 2022 budget went some way to breaking the disadvantage cycle for the marginalised in our community. In spite of these measures, it is our experience that, failing state sector institutions exacerbate the socio-economic conditions that support that cycle of disadvantage.

Challenge 2000 agree with Commission, on page one of their document 'A Fair Chance for all that', that persistent disadvantage remains a, 'big problem'.

Submissions

A FAIR CHANCE FOR ALL: BREAKING THE DISADVANTAGE CYCLE: SCOPING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN INQUIRY

We make the following four submissions:

Firstly: We recommend that the Terms of Reference, (ToR), empower the Commission to identify failing state systems that support socio-economic conditions that drive the cycle of disadvantage and reduce well-being and productivity.

We ask that the Commission structure the ToR, to ensure that they undertake a system level analysis, to identify existing, failing state system structures, that maintain the cycle of socio-economic disadvantage, among the poorest and most disadvantaged, and additionally decrease the well-being and productivity of all.

We ask that the ToR ensure that this analysis, addresses the issue of: how is it that urgent transformational change, required to break the cycle of disadvantage, has been unfailingly called for across inquiries, reviews, and reports in New Zealand, for well over three decades, and that this change has failed to appear? This need for urgent change had been first identified by the publication of, 'Puao-Te-Ata-Tu, The Report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee,' in 1988. Most reports and review calling for change, since 1988, continue to reference this 1988 report. (Boulton A., et al, 2020),

Secondly: We recommend that the ToR empower the Commission to; conduct qualitative social research to obtain additional evidence about the present state of the people most disadvantaged by the various failed state systems; and to obtain evidence to support system changes that will increase well-being and productivity.

We acknowledge that there have been many reports over the decades, that identify failures, and make recommendations for urgent action, across a number of state institutions, such as, those of, the criminal justice, family court, child protection, welfare, mental health and addictions, and health and disability systems. Research focusing on any of these systems could legitimately be a focus of the Commissions effort.

We recommend that the ToR should outline a research plan and prioritise research efforts.

Thirdly: We recommend that, the ToR is structured to support the Commission to focus this research plan, as a first priority, on the objective of finding ways to put, well-being, back into the failing welfare system. We recommend that this social, qualitative, research focus be broken into three key research questions:

- How does the current welfare system in New Zealand affect the wellbeing of beneficiaries?
- What are the outcomes and well-being of those who are transitioning off the benefit?
- Is the current welfare system continuing to uphold the wellbeing and social rights of New Zealand in the current neoliberal era?

(Sudden A.N. 2016)

Fourthly: We recommend that the ToR empowers the Commission, to advocate for the reconfiguring of existing, state welfare systems, that are shown to be failing to address the well-being needs of the poorest and most disadvantaged among us, and advocate for this change, on the basis that to do so increases the well-being and productivity of all.

Conclusion

Challenge 2000 recommend that the Commission create Terms of Reference that support their, evidence based identification, critique and advocacy for the change and development, of failed state systems that drive the cycle of disadvantage and fail to increase well-being and productivity.

References

Boulton A., Levy M., Cvitanovic L., (2020), 'Beyond Puaotē-ā-tu: Realising the promise of a new day'.

Sudden N.S., (2016), 'Putting wellbeing back into welfare: Exploring social development in Aotearoa from beneficiaries' perspectives'.