

**Submission to the Ministry of Social Development  
on the Proposed Auckland Social Policy Forum**

**Submitted by Leigh Auton**

**As Chair of the Tomorrow's Manukau Strategic Steering Group**

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## 1. Executive summary

This submission is made by the Chair of the Tomorrow's Manukau; Manukau Āpōpō, Strategic Steering Group (TMSSG), a forum composed of the CEOs, Regional Managers or senior members of agencies in Counties Manukau (see appendix A), with ideas and input from members of that forum.<sup>1,2</sup> The TMSSG represents over 70 organisations which have worked together since they launched Tomorrow's Manukau in 2001, with the collective vision for Manukau being "Progressive, Proud and Prosperous". Since then they have worked collaboratively to realise that vision and to address social issues through developing strategy and delivering on projects.

The main points of the submission are as follows:

- A principles-based and long-term strategic framework should set the scene for the Social Policy Forum.
- While developing such a strategic framework through an inclusive and iterative process, the Forum, for Manukau or the southern sector, can hit the ground running by continuing to work across the existing Tomorrow's Manukau agencies while developing the longer-term portfolio of activities.
- The focus of the Forum should ensure that pressing immediate issues of the day do not capture all the resources, at the expense of projects that address the prevention of social problems.
- While the composition of the Social Policy Forum is critical, those organisations that can't be present at that table can be included in the planning and delivery of social policy through a sub-regional structure, for which the current Tomorrow's Manukau provides a model.
- The Tomorrow's Manukau partnership provides a well tried and tested model to deal with social issues that are prevalent in their communities or if required, a selected community.
- Tomorrow's Manukau, a forum at the sub-regional scale with links into the community, can provide advice into a political body such as the proposed Social Policy Forum, to ensure that community voices are heard.
- This efficient model delivers an effective response through building on collective knowledge and skills, using pooled, prioritised resources, thus reducing or eliminating overlap and replication.
- The Forum could continue to deliver on those projects already prioritised and currently underway through the governance of the TMSSG.
- Finally, the change of so many governance arrangements and legislation within Auckland towards the end of this year could result in a loss of impetus in existing projects and current inter-agency relationships. The Social Policy Forum and the Auckland Transition Agency should consider how to retain the benefits derived through the Tomorrow's Manukau partnership as we move into that new governance era.

## 2. Introduction

This response has been prepared by the Chair of the Tomorrow's Manukau Strategic Steering Group (TMSSG) with input from individual members but not representing the formal views of their organisations. The TMSSG provides leadership and direction, and identifies priority issues and opportunities for collaborative action within Manukau City.

<http://www.tomorrowsmanukau.co.nz/how/SSG.html>. The TMSSG also monitors the development of community outcomes and how effectively we are working together to achieve those outcomes. Collaborative projects, initiated and carried out under the auspices of the TMSSG are those which benefit from a partnership approach to increase both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the projects. Tomorrow's Manukau has, even before the LGA (2002) came into being with its

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<sup>1</sup> This submission does not formally represent the views of the Tomorrow's Manukau partner organisations.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Social Development, while a member of the TMSSG, is the agency receiving the submission and so has abstained from contributing in any way.

requirement to develop community outcomes, provided an inter-agency forum to identify and address social concerns collectively.

In January 2010 the Minister of Social Development launched a discussion document on a Social Policy Forum for Auckland. The inter-agency nature of this proposed forum bears many similarities to the Tomorrow's Manukau partnership, albeit the Forum as currently described is a political forum while Tomorrow's Manukau is a senior officer's forum which can link political leadership with action on the ground. The development of the Social Policy Forum proposed by Cabinet in 2009, is but one of a suite of governance reforms for the Auckland Region. Feedback on the document is sought by 21 May 2010.

The proposal to create the Social Policy Forum and the proposal to set long term goals is welcomed. The mandate of the Forum needs to be developed with consideration of the other governance changes which include but are not limited to:

- The third Auckland Bill which is currently being formulated
- The development of a Spatial Plan
- The powers and functions of Local Boards.
- Auckland Council Committee structure not yet in place
- Roles, functions and operations of the Māori Board
- Recently announced amendments to the LGA (2002)

The multiplicity of new entities and their respective and collective planning frameworks need to be carefully considered to ensure that the required input to social policy is obtained in an effective manner. Without a clear framework and network to obtain input and execute actions, there is the potential for unnecessary replication and/or serious gaps in social policy to occur.

The Social Policy Forum also needs to consider how it can utilise, help transition and enhance existing inter-agency and organisational structures such as Tomorrow's Manukau which currently play an enabling role in addressing social issues, in particular those which cross agency and organisational boundaries.

A concern is that Tomorrow's Manukau is currently facilitated through Manukau City Council which will cease to exist on 31 October 2010. A complementary structure to Tomorrow's Manukau is not identified in the new governance structure for Auckland and the loss of the relationships, structure and current activities of Tomorrow's Manukau could be a retrograde step for the communities of Manukau. The Social Policy Forum could help support the resources that are available through Tomorrow's Manukau through the transition phase to ensure they are not lost, while new organisational and planning frameworks come into existence and consolidate.

Furthermore, given the success of Tomorrow's Manukau, this form of inter-agency structure could provide an excellent model to assist in the delivery of the work of the Social Policy Forum.

### **3. Response to proposals**

#### **3.1 Objectives**

I support the high level objectives with minor amendments to reflect the breadth of interest in social issues. Ensuring that the following relationships are adhered to should be articulated as objectives of the forum.

I therefore suggest that the objectives include a reference to the following:

1. **Working through inter-agency partnerships to achieve common goals.**  
The Tomorrow's Manukau partnership has proved to be a very effective approach to carrying out social policy, ensuring that resources are pooled and that overlap is avoided.
2. **The NGO sector and their constituency being a fundamental part of the community.**  
This sector is a font of knowledge on social issues that impact on their community and should be identified as an integral part of the Forum's processes.

### 3. Working within the overall planning framework for Auckland.

If the Spatial Plan provides the overarching vision for Auckland and is a spatial representation of social, economic and environmental policy, then the Social Issues Forum must work within, or in tandem with, the Spatial Plan.

#### 3.1.1 Principles based

The strategic intent and objectives of the Forum should be based on principles articulated in the Forum's Statement of Intent document. Suggested principles would be:

1. **The concept of working at the appropriate scale** and ensuring that local issues are not lost through competition for resourcing. A social issue may relate to one or more communities and can best be addressed at that community scale. However the focus of the Social Issues Forum covering the Auckland Region does have the benefit of ensuring that related activities can be linked across communities from different parts of the region.
2. **An inter-agency approach should occur at every level.** Coordination of effort where there are common goals to be achieved across agencies or where the activities of one agency may contribute to the success of another. As an example there are inter-dependencies between housing, education, health and crime which should be recognised in any social planning framework.
3. Ensuring that the principles of the **Treaty of Waitangi are given effect to in the representation, planning and execution** of the work of the Forum
4. Ensuring that efficiencies are maximised by **pooling rather than replicating resource use through collaborative action.**
5. Ensuring that the strategies and actions endorsed by the Social Policy Forum are supported by a wide range of views. **Providing integrity of advice; from the grass roots to the top through a well articulated and simplified channel.** The voice of the community must be reflected in the work of the Forum.

#### 3.2 Activities

I agree with the activities set out in the document but would add that the balance of activities should move further towards prevention than is currently the case. This would again require wider input into policy initiatives which encourage healthy, happy communities who have a pride in their 'place'. Linkages with the Local Boards and their communities and a range of organisations within a locality would be required. Input into planning processes and infrastructure development, ideally through the Spatial Plan and subsequent hierarchy of plans, would also be required.

The TMSSG encourages the following processes to help shift the emphasis towards prevention.

Commence the work of the Forum with long-term strategic planning which identifies a desired state where social problems are significantly diminished in Auckland. Then, given the gaps between that state and where we are now, develop a community focussed on-going action plan to achieve and maintain the desired outcome. This approach has recently been carried out within communities in Manukau as a TMSSG project to help communities develop a long-term plan for the well-being of their communities. <http://www.towards2060.org.nz/> If the Towards 2060 approach was extended to other areas of Auckland, it would assist in providing a community level contribution to the work of the Forum. It is also suggested that the Forum call upon the significant body of knowledge and skills in the community and from the agencies which support them, in delivering on their activities.

While a strategic approach is required from the Forum, that thinking has already been carried out in Manukau within the TMSSG, resulting in a number of priority projects which will still be underway during the time that the Forum comes into being. Therefore, for Manukau or the southern sector, the Forum can hit the ground running by continuing to work across the existing Tomorrow's Manukau agencies while developing the longer-term portfolio of activities.

#### 3.2.1 Priorities for early action

The projects which are recommended to the Forum for initial action, while based within the current Manukau City boundary, are generally concentrated according to need, in one or more of the many communities that exist within Manukau, rather than being uniformly addressed across the whole City. The concern is that without the Social Policy Forum there could be a loss of the community commitment to change; and overarching governance over the project's progress, leading to loss of a mechanism for collaboration in addressing the issue

Current projects which will need attention beyond 2010 include:

### ***Increasing Participation in Quality Early Childhood Education***

The long-term goal is to improve educational, employment and other social outcomes by developing children's learning and social skills so they ready for school and develop on to further learning and into the workforce. To assist, the aim of this project is to ensure that all children under five have the opportunity to attend high quality early childhood education and care.

### ***Māori Outcomes***

Te Roopu Huarahi (the Māori Outcomes project team) was launched to consider how best to reflect the aspirations of Māori in Manukau and develop outcomes that would lead to achievement of the goals identified by the Māori community. Priority outcomes have been identified but plans to deliver on those outcomes need to be developed and initiated.

### ***Wiri Improvement Programme Project***

This project is directed at improving the quality of life for all the residents of the Wiri / Rata Vine area of Manurewa by co-ordinating the work of a number of organisations. The work focuses on:

- Health, Social and Economic Wellbeing;
- Community Safety and Renewal; and
- Built Environment

The Wiri Improvement Programme involves working with the community to develop appropriate services and facilities and supporting residents to create neighbourhoods in which they enjoy living.

### ***Reducing family Violence Programme***

Tomorrow's Manukau partners and key agencies are working together to share information, resources and programmes in a concerted effort to reduce and eliminate family violence in Manukau. This issue is a real concern to the community and this project is working towards:

- Easier access to support services for those dealing with family violence and abuse in their lives
- New services targeting identified gaps
- Better co-ordination and collaboration between agencies
- Better information on the impact of interventions across Manukau

### ***Manukau Youth Initiative***

The overarching vision of the Manukau Youth Initiative (MYI) is that all young people are engaged in education, training, employment or other worthwhile activity.

The MYI's objective is to ensure support is available to young people leaving secondary education to achieve this. It will build on existing support by:

- Helping to formalise a process with secondary schools so that contact details for all school leavers are provided to Youth Transition Services for follow-up.
- Ensuring as far as possible that all young people leaving school who need support to transition, are offered a customised service.

- Following up with all school leavers at regular intervals until a successful transition has occurred.
- Identifying opportunities to develop new pathways to facilitate the transition of school leavers into further education, training, employment or other meaningful activity.

The Manukau Youth Initiative will also provide a coordinated, strategic approach for the provision of transition support to young people in Manukau by establishing local community and stakeholder clusters, and providing inter-agency support to address issues and opportunities to help ensure successful transitions.

### ***Manukau Housing Working Party***

The purpose of the Manukau Housing Working Party is to gain knowledge and provide an accurate assessment of the impact of the current economic recession on housing need in Manukau City. The specific focus will be on emergency housing, household overcrowding and affordable housing. This assessment will inform advocacy, help identify short and long-term solutions to these chronic housing problems, and provide the basis for engagement with Government about initiatives to promote housing supply and home ownership.

## **3.3 Membership of the Forum**

### **3.3.1 Ministers**

The proposed membership of the Forum correctly forms the core of the group but needs to be widened to include Treaty Partners, and other Ministers whose portfolios contribute directly to addressing social policy in Auckland. The selection of these Ministers can help redress the balance between prevention and cure.

Therefore there is a good case for the Minister of Whanau Ora and Minister of Housing to be members; with overcrowding and poor housing being a key contributor to health issues, which leads to a further social deprivation.<sup>3</sup> The concern of poor housing in Manukau is reflected in it being a current priority project for the TMSSG.

Some areas of Counties Manukau are known to have poor academic achievement levels and early childhood education participation is also low. Support from the Ministry of Education is vital to this large population base.

Recent efforts from the New Zealand Police are reaping rewards in addressing the crime rate in South Auckland. The New Zealand Police is showing real leadership in focussing on reducing the cause of crime and their Minister would be advantageous as a Forum member.

However, whatever the ministerial composition, it will be essential that other relevant ministers are connected to the Forum.

### **3.3.2 Māori**

The new governance model is an opportunity to strengthen Māori representation at all levels of decision making including the Social Policy Forum table. A key new contribution to that model will be to establish a statutory independent board to promote issues of significance to Māori. Māori status as tangata whenua also suggests that the Māori Board should be represented on the Forum. In addition Māori providers are available to contribute to a wide range of social policy programmes; responses to the priorities set by the Forum.

In addition there are Māori organisations being Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Ora o Manukau that are members of TMSSG who have been very active in inter-agency projects as well as driving their

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.arphs.govt.nz/Publications\\_reports/archive/HealthyHousing/HHIAexsummary.pdf](http://www.arphs.govt.nz/Publications_reports/archive/HealthyHousing/HHIAexsummary.pdf) (accessed 3 May 2010)

own policy initiatives. It is important that the Forum acknowledges the contribution of those organisations, their knowledge bases and relationships.

### **3.3.3 Local Boards**

The discussion document mentions that the Local Boards will be represented at the Forum. That representation may best be made at a scale which relates directly to inter-agency fora focussed on social policy. The current Tomorrow's Manukau or extended Counties Manukau scale may prove to be a practical scale which would translate to a Southern Sector Board representation on the Forum. Critical, would be a mechanism for ensuring that representation of those sector Local Boards would be transparent and benefits would flow through to each of the contributing communities.

### **3.3.4**

#### **Other representation and contributions**

Not all organisations or sector groups can be represented at the political level but they can ensure their voices are heard through a sub-regional forum such as Tomorrow's Manukau where NGO organisations, CCO's, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Pacific Island Advisory Committee are members. All these voices are essential to ensure that key issues are identified and that their communities of interest can be included in the solutions.

On the occasions that issues arise that are specific to one organisation, additional mechanisms could be put in place to interact directly with the Forum.

### **3.4 Input to the forum; how it seeks advice and extends it's influence to achieve its objectives**

Social policy is not developed nor implemented in a vacuum. The Spatial Plan is an opportunity for the key overarching social policy of Auckland to be developed, be visible and depicted on a geographic framework. Social policy needs to be considered in the light of economic factors and the on-going development and re-development of Auckland.

The development of the Spatial Plan and social policy should be an interactive iterative process, both top down and bottom up, to gain acceptance and buy-in from the communities of Auckland. It should encourage a culture where there is a recognition that what happens in one part of the City will eventually impact on other areas and the realisation that we are all in this together. This is also crucial to addressing socio-economic disparities across Auckland City.

While the priorities for social policy will need community input through the Local Boards, refinement of the strategy responding to those priorities and its implementation would benefit from an inter-agency grouping containing subject matter experts to best consider what to tackle at the local scale. Understanding of local issues in Manukau is driven by having people with local interests around the table. This particularly applies to issues of policing, housing, and health and the intersect with Local Boards. New Zealand Police services and Health delivery are currently structured around Local Government in Auckland, corresponding in South Auckland to the southern Local Board sector of the Auckland Council. Hence building on the current Tomorrow's Manukau grouping is a sensible place to start. Similar groups could be developed in the central, western and northern sectors of Auckland.

As with the current Tomorrow's Manukau model, it is imperative that the representation of those organisations is at the senior level within the area and that the cross-agency approach has Ministerial agreement. Having Mana Whenua and formal Taurahere representation, and the senior officers, CEOs or Regional Manager, at the table has been essential to make decisions which commit resources, and ensure projects are carried out.

Because there are so many potential organisations which could deliver on policy articulated by the Social Issues Forum, there needs to be a well defined planning framework with clear input requirements and methods of achieving deliverables. Noticeably, some deliverables will need the assistance of the CCO's. While not negating the need for dialogue with CCO's on how to assist

with the delivery of social policy, the direction needs to be clearly identified and incorporated into the Spatial Plan through to the LTCCP and the District Plan. A strong planning framework which delivers on social policy will be essential to set direction for the myriad of new organisations and relationships which will be the next governance model for Auckland.

## **Appendix A: Tomorrow's Manukau Strategic Steering Group (TMSSG) Member Organisations**

Auckland Regional Public Health Services (ARPHS)  
AUT University  
City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET)  
Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB)  
Counties Manukau Police  
Enterprising Manukau  
Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC)  
Manukau City Council (MCC)  
Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT)  
Ministry of Education (MOE)  
Ministry of Maori Development  
Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA)  
Ministry of Social Development (MSD)  
Pacific Island Advisory Committee (PIAC)  
The Salvation Army  
Telstra Clear Events Centre  
Te Ora o Manukau

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