

Submission to WCC Social Wellbeing Framework Te Horopaki ā-Rautaki May 2021

Who are we:

An Association that represents the Residents in the Te Aro and Wellington Central, while recognising 'our space' is also the space used by business, workers, and visitors. This area has become the largest residential suburb in Wellington in terms of population - on the smallest land area.

Our purpose:

To be a progressive and influential voice for our members through engagement with the appropriate public authorities to enhance the wellbeing of those living in the inner-city.

Area of interest:

To achieve a sustainable living environment in the inner-city through adherence to UN Sustainable Development Goals, and proactively working to enhance Democratic Resilience through co-design and civic engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Inner City Wellington (ICW) welcomes the development of a Social Wellbeing Framework tool and wish to comment only on a few specific aspects of the proposal:

- ✘ getting a holistic view of the policies contributing to Social Wellbeing in Wellington,
- ✘ the methods cited for a more systematic assessment of Council's role,
- ✘ encouraging community led responses,
- ✘ Personal Safety and wellbeing, and
- ✘ Council's roles.

We note that:

'The Social Wellbeing Framework is a tool to understand the Council's role in supporting the social wellbeing of its communities. The aspects of the Council's work that contributes to social wellbeing is vast and ranges from public space design for safety and social connection through social support for our City Housing residents. Given the range of Council functions impacting on social wellbeing, the Social Wellbeing Framework is not a strategy that outlines a high level direction or plan. It is a tool to help us think about what our role should be.'

GETTING A HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE POLICIES CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL WELLBEING IN WELLINGTON

It was useful seeing the 'map' of the legal context, outcomes, strategies and policies set out on pages 22-23.

However, this highlights a problem that has concerned ICW for some time:

ICW submits that: the number of strategies and policies make for a lot of work with words about the future and not enough action on what to do in the short term.

Surely if a strategy is developed that caters for folk across the age range, any differences which may require compromise in relation to one group or another can be identified and addressed.

The danger with the separate strategies is that options get developed within each that are not feasible when seen in context of the other.

Strategies should be streamlined so they can be reviewed holistically and resulting policies should all be current at least for a triennium.

ICW submits that:

- ✘ **The current range of strategies should be reduced – for example, why have one for children and a separate one for older people?**
- ✘ **All policies should be reviewed on a rolling triennial basis so they can be kept ‘in concert’ with each other.**
- ✘ **Year one and two reviews should highlight changes which can be signalled so that the total review each third year is manageable.**
- ✘ **It is unacceptable that we are operating under policies that have not been updated in over a decade (Community Facilities, Public Space Design, Positive Ageing) or have no date of adoption.**
- ✘ **We note that ‘An environmental scan of social wellbeing indicators can be performed every three years with a view to informing early Long-term Plan review considerations.’ Surely such a scan should also inform policy review.**

METHODS CITED FOR A MORE SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF COUNCIL’S ROLE

The Framework proposes WCC be ‘**more systematic** in assessing its role in the social wellbeing space.’

ICW notes that WCC is a party to the UN Standards for a Living Environment which is ADEQUATE. These are security of tenure; habitability; accessibility; affordability; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, location, and cultural adequacy.

The NZ Human Rights Commission has recently adapted these for our context and is seeking to have them incorporated in Legislation.

Active use of this framework by WCC in developing research questions would engender more useful questions and indicators than those currently found in RMS and Quality surveys undertaken. For example, the very limited section on housing focuses only on warmth and insulation.



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- ✓ **Security of tenure.**
- ✓ **Habitability.**
- ✓ **Accessibility.**
- ✓ **Affordability.**
- ✓ **Availability of services, materials, facilities & infrastructure.**
- ✓ **Location.**
- ✓ **Cultural adequacy**

ICW contends that the UN Standards for Living Environments should be built into the Framework, particularly in developing research questions and identifying indicators and outcomes.

The way in which research questions are formed is critical if WCC is to be able to develop appropriate indicators. For example, in relation to technology, easy questions relate to access. More importantly, do people have the **capability** to do what they want/need to do? Internet banking for example.

ICW also notes that current research doesn't allow for any picture to emerge about how the Inner-City residents feel about the inner city which is their neighbourhood as opposed to those who work, or come in for shopping, recreation, hospitality etc. (A 2015 Nielsen report did provide such a local focus, but results are now dated. It would be useful to repeat it.)

More broadly, a significant issue not identified in the Framework is that there is little to no LOCAL data (i.e. for each specific community) that is readily available about issues like food insecurity, loneliness, self-isolation, economic impacts on small businesses, household financial vulnerabilities, housing quality, discrimination etc. All of these became important during the Covid-19 pandemic, and it quickly became evident that a key resource for information was the Student Army and Residents' Associations.

Some good cooperative work was done with WCC which should now be used as a foundation for ongoing community engagement which can help create – alongside what other data is available – a more useful picture of the different needs and emerging issues of Wellington's varied communities. These would help set priorities especially when budgets are limited.

ICW suggests that WCC consider how to build on work done during Covid-19 and begin to systematically collect LOCAL DATA on issues that are critical for social wellbeing from a community perspective.

ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY LED RESPONSES

Within the Framework we note the laudable comment *'Sustainable community development practices encourage community-led responses, but some communities may need more active support from the Council.'*

- ✳ **ICW contends that this reflects the current approach of WCC giving information and seeking response – rather than a community engagement approach which seeks rather to elicit from the community what its needs and priorities are so the WCC can work with them and respond with plans that support outcomes that benefit that community.**
- ✳ **ICW suggests adding a fourth paragraph in the section 'Longer term Direction – Strategic Objectives' relating to Active Engagement with individual communities in the city and under 'Social' a specific commitment to Community Engagement and Co-design.**

PERSONAL SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The statistics cited in this section demonstrate a range of problems and it is now well documented that in 2021 these have increased. There are significant synergies with WCC's Resilience Strategy that would be useful to consider as part of a single policy.

ICW contends that a holistic approach involving all stakeholders is required here.

- ✦ **We support all strategies that bring together the range of players involved in addressing concerns.**
- ✦ **We note that ICW was not included in recent discussions re a 'social contract' despite being a key stakeholder in relation to outcomes and submit that this should be speedily addressed**
- ✦ **ICW has submitted separately that it believes Camera Base should never have been disestablished and that the existing service needs to be considerably enhanced to achieve an acceptable level of surveillance in the Inner City.**

COUNCIL'S ROLES

The proposed Framework demonstrates a very 'one-way' approach from WCC and not in keeping with their accountability to work on behalf of communities. This requires active engagement, not just Facilitation.

There is no indication of any effort to engage with communities to obtain information about their priorities or wish to work together with them in co-design. For example, in the section on Council's current contributions under contributing activities for the 'Liveable' concept (page 16), we see '*Designing an accessible and inclusive urban environment*'.....'*Designing play spaces for informal and formal play*'...'*Food security initiatives enabling access to healthy food*'.

And in the section on the 'Resilient' concept, there is no mention of community engagement, yet this is an area where it is critical for successful outcomes as the Covid pandemic demonstrated.

ICW strongly suggests adding a role of Co-designer/Facilitator to that of Partner: This would require actively engaging with communities in co-design of research, strategies and policies as far as possible to improve consultation and community outcomes

ICW thanks you for the opportunity to present this submission and advises we do not wish to make an oral submission.



Rev Stephen King
CHAIR ICW