



Submission to:

Governance and Administration Select Committee

Subject:

Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill

Date:

25 May 2018

Contact Person:

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We wish to appear before the Committee.

Background/organisational description

The purpose of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Ngā Pou Whakawhirinaki o Aotearoa, is to:

- Ensure that individuals do not suffer through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available; or through an inability to express their needs effectively — Me noho mataara kia kaua te tangata e mate i tōna kore mōhio ki ngā āhuatanga e āhei atu ana ia, ki ngā mahi rānei e tika ana kia mahia e ia, ki ngā ratonga rānei e āhei atu ana ia; i te kore rānei e āhei āna ki te whakaputa i ōna hiahia kia mārama mai ai te tangata.
- Exert a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally — Kia tino whai wāhi atu ki te auhatanga o ngā kaupapa ā-iwi me ngā ratonga ā-rohe, puta noa hoki i te motu.

We support the principle of partnership reflected in the Treaty of Waitangi. E tautoko ana Ngā Pou Whakawhirinaki o Aotearoa i te mātāpono o te pātuitanga e ai ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

About Citizens Advice Bureau

We work to empower individuals to resolve their problems and to strengthen communities. The person-to-person service provided by over 2,300 Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) volunteers is unique in New Zealand. From 82 locations around New Zealand, the CAB provides individuals with a free, impartial and confidential service of information, advice, advocacy and referral.



Each CAB is an independent legal entity which is funded locally. All CABs are members of the national body, CABNZ, which provides national systems that support quality and consistency of operations and service delivery. CABNZ is primarily funded by central government. The way that the CAB is structured and funded optimises the benefits of the local identity, connectedness and responsiveness of CABs that are accountable back to their community, combined with the efficiencies and effectiveness of national systems to support consistency and quality of service.

In the 2016/17 financial year we had over 525,000 interactions with clients, including around 200,000 in-depth enquiries where we offered information, advice and support across the gamut of issues that affect people in their daily lives. During this time there were also approximately 1.8 million unique visits to our website and over 3 million pages of information viewed.

We use the insights gained from our engagement with clients to seek socially just policies and services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Position on the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill

The Citizens Advice Bureau strongly supports the amendment contained in this bill to reinstate local government's role as a promoter of present and future social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing.

We have a particular interest in this, as the CAB in New Zealand has played a key and fundamental role in supporting community well-being in long standing partnerships with local government. The first CABs in NZ were established by Auckland Council in the early 1970's and Councils have continued to play a key role in supporting CAB, with many being the primary funder of their local CAB.

Through the CAB service we increase the engagement and participation of people in their communities by empowering them to know what their rights and options are, and what actions they can take to resolve their issues. This underpins democracy, social well-being, resilience and supports economic growth as our service supports people to be aware, knowledgeable, resourced and skilled to participate in their community and to contribute more broadly to society. As a universal service – about everything and for everyone – CAB has a unique presence and role in communities around New Zealand.

The fact that each CAB is governed locally and the service to clients is delivered by trained volunteers from the local community also enhances participation, social cohesion and local responsiveness.

Recently, CABs have experienced increasing uncertainty with their Council funding. Some Councils have shifted their community funding to short-term project based or targeted



funding, which does not fit with the ongoing operational funding that local CABs need to survive.

Our hope is that the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Bill will strengthen the understanding that the CAB is a bed rock community service that uniquely helps local government deliver on its reinstated purpose of promoting community well-being.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Please contact me if you have any questions, or want any clarification about our submission.

Yours sincerely

Kerry Dalton
Chief Executive