

13. REPORT ON MONITORING OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING IN NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST CITIES

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Corporate Plan Output: Policy Advice	

The purpose of this report is to brief the Committee about the National Indicators Project. The project has been developed to monitor community wellbeing in New Zealand's largest cities. This report is also being put to the other city councils listed below:

- Auckland City Council
- Manukau City Council
- North Shore City Council
- Waitakere City Council
- Wellington City Council

INTRODUCTION

For some time now there has been an awareness of the differences between large urban centres in New Zealand and their less populous counterparts. This awareness has brought about a concern of the impacts of urbanisation and the affects of this on the wellbeing of the citizens of those centres.

To address this, the Chief Executive Officers of New Zealand's largest cities have initiated a project that will ensure a co-ordinated approach to monitoring and assessing the impact of urbanisation. The cities involved are Auckland, Christchurch, Manukau, North Shore, Waitakere and Wellington. All have a population in excess of 150,000 and all are experiencing the sort of issues that come about through higher density living.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

The biggest set of issues faced by New Zealand cities is sustainable management of expected future population, employment and infrastructure growth, in a way that maintains and ideally improves community wellbeing. These growth factors interact in complex ways affecting social, economic and environmental outcomes. The legislative requirement to monitor the state of the environment recognises the need to measure impacts on the environment. However, a wider approach is required to address the social and economic impacts. For example, the make up of a population affects whether the workforce is ready for employment in growth industries and health status affects the ability of children to succeed at school and their future employment prospects. Similarly infrastructure affects the quality of the built environment, and the quality of the built environment affects the way people interact, feel safe and move around their neighbourhood.

Monitoring the communities of New Zealand's larger cities will enable assessment of these and other like matters and highlight a number of common themes specifically relevant to an urban environment. These might include issues such as housing affordability, accessibility to services, safety, and social cohesion among other things.

INFORMATION

As elected representatives of those communities, city councils have a strong requirement for information on conditions in their communities and the success of policies in addressing big city social, economic and environmental issues.

In many cases the information needed is dispersed and difficult to co-ordinate, and there are a huge number of possible measures and indicators that could be used. Additional to this is the growing awareness of the complex interaction between social, economic and environmental issues making the question of “just what is this indicator telling us?” difficult to answer. These problems are reflected in the very wide range of indicators currently used by councils.

A co-ordinated approach such as demonstrated in this project, should enable consistent monitoring and reporting of results that can be fed into strategic and annual planning of the local authorities involved. It will also enable the participating local authorities to identify common themes, issues or problems that might be addressed through joint action and co-operative effort.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Committee receive the above report.
 2. That a report on social conditions in New Zealand’s largest cities be prepared for contribution to the 2001/02 planning round.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.