

Report on Social Wellbeing Policy Review from Community & Whanau Network and general community forum – Dec 2009

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BACKGROUND

Nelson City Council (NCC) in conjunction with Community & Whanau (the network of health and social services agencies throughout Nelson) invited people to attend a facilitated workshop to explore questions posed by Nelson City Council staff relating to the Social Wellbeing Policy (SWP) Review.

From the Council background information provided " The aim of this review is to create a policy that focuses on wellbeing at a community level, has flexibility to respond to community needs and provides clarity on Council's role in relation to social wellbeing issues. It will be a high level policy that will set objectives for how Council will contribute to achieving social wellbeing in Nelson."

24 people attended this workshop held on 7 Dec 2009, accompanied by 7 NCC Councillors and 10 staff (some intermittently), with 8 apologies noted.

The majority of participants work within health and social service agencies, with some attendees identifying as residents. Of those who work in the sector, invariably these people have first hand and daily experiences of Nelson city residents needing specific support, information or advocacy about a health or social issue that relates directly to themselves or their families. One worker supplied a recent graph which was a summary of family issues for which referrals had been made.

METHODOLOGY

The workshop was structured into 7 focus groups, with participants electing to begin with one group, and with the understanding that participants could move to other groups and join in the conversations as they session developed.

The aim of the consultation workshop was to explore the following:

1. What are the key social wellbeing issues for Nelson?
2. What should Council's role be to address issues? What are the appropriate boundaries between Council, central government and the community's responsibilities and capabilities?
3. How do we prioritise where Council should focus its efforts?

Consistent with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Annual Report focussing on trends across areas of people's lives, the workshop chose six of the ten general areas from this report for which focus groups were developed, with a seventh "Emerging issues" being added. Community & Whanau always seeks to take a proactive approach and pride themselves on being at the front edge of changes as they emerge within the community.

The MSD focus areas of Economic Development and Standard of Living areas were combined for the workshop. Civil and Political Rights plus Leisure and Recreation were perceived to fall outside the scope of Community & Whanau sector and were thus eliminated for the purpose of the workshop.

Some participants expressed an interest individually to the facilitator after the workshop to discuss the Implementation Assessment Report. A separate focus group of 4 met later to do this work.

RESPONSES TO PROCESS

Overall, responses were very positive that this had been a constructive and open session. While the workshop was one and half hours, people were efficiently and energetically engaged throughout, responding to issues and unravelling concerns.

Most agreed that it was highly valuable to have NCC councillors, staff and community present bringing different perspectives with some saying they had a unique opportunity to get to know councillors especially from a place of shared living experiences of being residents of Nelson. The diversity of agencies was acknowledged, with a recognition that there were many commonalities in opinions and concerns. A request was made that this workshop be reported in Live Nelson and/or the Leader to indicate the level of connecting and working together that was occurring for the wider needs of Nelson residents. While concern was expressed over the long delay in reviewing this policy, NCC was commended for undertaking this process and it was acknowledged that many Council's do not even have such a policy. There was a general sense of appreciation of being in a forum of such positive willingness to work together on what is seen as a high level and highly valued policy which potentially has significant impacts on all citizens.

COMMON THEMES

Despite 7 groups focussing on specific issues and concerns within the community, it is significant to see common themes emerge. While all groups clearly identified the range of issues facing our city and these will be summarised both within each focus group responses, and in recommendations, the question in which most common themes emerged was in the area of Council's role.

Council role is required to be offering:

- leadership** – trusted to see the big picture of all activities and the interrelationships
 - facilitation** – make easy the connections between organisations that might otherwise not be connected; fund/support existing agencies to provide services, host all events
 - overseeing** – help reduce gaps and disconnections – provide strategic framework for community work
 - research** - to identify duplications in social services and gaps in provision
 - advocacy** – bring the city's voice to central government agencies around policy and funding, apply pressure for needs to be met
 - fostering** – support the agencies that are making the changes NCC want to see happen
- accountability** – how to more accurately measure outcomes and benefits

The most common theme overall was the genuine concern that NCC take a **community development approach** to all issues. (This will be explored in more depth in the Responses to the Implementation Report – see also definition at base of the Response Model in that section.)

Other common themes included concerns over the limited range **of appropriate and affordable housing** as a thread that underpins all social wellbeing (SW). NCC Councillors have decided this workshop that the Housing Policy now come under the Social Wellbeing Policy (as are Positive Ageing and Youth Policies), as it will allow housing issues to be integrated better into wellbeing outcomes. Housing issues as they relate to SW will thus be done as a separate consultation and report process.

Another theme was the naming and acknowledging of **key organisations who are doing significant social wellbeing work**, which aligns with NCC SW Policy. This will be also explored in more depth under the Responses to Implementation Report section.

What also emerged in this workshop (which is a common theme in Community & Whanau network discussions) was the concern over **the inequity and inadequacy of the NCC Community Assistance Fund** to support especially those organisations recognised as doing the lead key social wellbeing work. This theme will be developed further in the Summary section.

NOTE: Because these are common, they have been withdrawn as separate entries in each focus group findings as a way to reduce duplication of notes.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

CULTURE AND IDENTITY Issues

Nelson is experiencing a quite rapid change in demography due to the immigration of migrants and refugees (m&r). Nelson currently has the third highest proportion of overseas born people NOT from NZ living here. This is not well known, however it is creating a sense of uncertainty and potential threat about our identity as Nelsonians.

Employers and schools are a key first contact place for m&r. It is viewed as important to be open to learning who these migrants are, their culture and their needs as they become part of Nelson's culture.

There appears to be a need for clarity about how to support employers, schools and others to support greater understanding and acceptance of ethnic diversity, without imposing a work dominated or mainstream culture upon m&r?

The group had a discussion on what constitutes **cultural identity**. They shared views on the central nature of identity to all people; that it's about physical location, personal history and shared life experiences. They also explored ways they believed Council could support the development of a strength based model of more openly acknowledging this diversity; finding more positive ways to celebrate uniqueness and difference; fostering acceptance of culture as always changing as a community embraces new peoples. It was agreed that those with disabilities or deafness (where commonalities are shared) create sub-cultures of people to connect and feel they belong which enhances their sense of social wellbeing.

It was generally accepted that any/all cultural identities are part of what makes Nelson unique and that we must be supportive that it not become a barrier for people to make connections with one another.

The focus group affirmed that identity occurs at two levels – being part of Nelson as a whole community and at a neighbourhood level. **Note – migrants are not taking jobs away from kiwis – they are (new) kiwis.**

Council's role

1. **Be the holder of Nelson's history** that includes the current increase and changing cultural diversity and make it accessible to the public.
2. **Acknowledge organisations** such as **Nelson Multicultural Council and Settlement Support, Refugee Services, English Language Partners and Neighbourhood Support** as key implementers of NCC outcomes in relation to engaging, supporting and empowering migrants and refugees and taking a whole family approach to their integration.
3. **Actively acknowledge and promote** the changing face of the community. (A quarter of newcomers are children (0-14 years) and nearly three-quarters (73 percent) are in the working age group (15-64 years). Only 2 percent are in the 65 years and over age group. SSNZ demographic report 2006). Young families coming to live in Nelson help to balance the "ageing population" statistics that face Nelson and are thus valuable to the economy, to the social fabric of Nelson.
4. **Support those organisations** named above to hold events such as cultural awareness workshops, neighbourhood days, street parties, continue projects such as Racism project of Nelson Safer Community Council) to promote acceptance and safety for newcomers and ensure racial discrimination is not tolerated.
5. **Use other languages** in at least parts of NCC publications and use publications to share personal stories and bring m&r voices into our mainstream.
6. **Liaise** with Nelson Chamber of Commerce as lead agency to support migrants into meaningful work that uses their skills.

Priorities for Council

1. Understand the make up of our community

Collect the data - understand where migrants are coming from and what they want in terms of support and integration

2. Promote the changing demographics as a positive force in our community - share stories of who is here, where they came from.

3. Identify and acknowledge the key partner agencies who are delivering support to m&r and commit to appropriate financial and support.

4. Use the power of the employment connections

Identify EDA, Chamber and W&I as partner agencies to promote and support m&r to be placed in appropriate work. Identify work growth areas. Broker relationships to other key partner agencies (#3) to help educate employers to understand cultural subtleties and barriers migrants face.

Promote the significant contribution m&r make to our community and acknowledge the difficulties they face. I

Individual case management can be highly appropriate but is very expensive – NCC could be advocating to central govt for more of it given our high percentage of m&r.

5. Support those organisations creating social connectedness

6. Education

Two levels – 1. Promoting and raising awareness of our increasing diversity and how we can relate to newcomers, and to newcomers about Nelson services, and activities.

2. Identifying education & work opportunities – supporting linkages to agencies – **Volunteer Nelson** is also key as most migrants connect here initially.

ECONOMIC STANDARD OF LIVING AND PAID WORK Issues

5 key areas were identified within this focus group

1. Economic Wellbeing

Sunshine wages are still identified as a barrier. NCC to identify and work with EDA & Chamber of Commerce to assist a change to this situation. Nelson is at risk of losing workers to higher wage jobs going elsewhere in NZ.

2. High Deprivation areas

Identify and acknowledge key partner organisations in high deprivation areas and provide appropriate financial and other support to continue providing better access to services, advocacy and building resiliency.

3. Youth

Availability of paid work for youth, lack of life skills, budgeting, financial literacy for youth are barriers to their engagement in work. NCC to continue to support youth employment/training. Identify and acknowledge EDA, Budget Services and other key agencies and support appropriately.

Assess potential overlap of services e.g. 104 youth service providers. Key partner **Youth Worker's Collective**.

The work of **Connections** was acknowledged as a good example of barriers and issues have been successfully resolved.

4. Positive Ageing

Promote life long learning for whole community. Group identified a need to be a co-ordinator for organising older adult education to support this promotion.

5. Housing

NCC still has lowest volume of community housing in NZ. NCC needs to be advocating at central government for increased stock for HNZC homes, NCC housing for aged and community based social housing. Identify and support key partner organisations such as Nelson Tasman Housing Trust, Habitat for Humanity, Abbeyfield and Franklyn Village to increase affordable housing for vulnerable people. Support can come in the form of making currently unused NCC land available, facilitating the increase of social housing through developer

Concern was expressed over knowledge of increasing homeless and a suggestion for NCC to involve itself in the NZ Coalition for the Homeless to support quantifying current status.

General concerns

1. Lack of knowledge of and co-ordination between agencies in this arena.

2. Is there accessible infrastructure? E.g. buses to work, access for people with disabilities
3. Identifying Volunteer Nelson as key agency to broker connections.

Council's role

1. **Facilitate meetings of key employment related agencies** to identify targets and measurable outcomes to reduce barriers to workers including youth.
2. **Increased co-ordination** and **advocacy** in adult education of employers, youth, positive ageing
3. Continue to **facilitate housing forum**, supporting them to identify realistic targets and measurable outcomes.
3. Strengthen support of those who work in high deprivation areas.

Priorities

1. **Identify and financially support agencies** dedicated to supporting high deprivation communities.
2. **Facilitate** the increase of social housing stock
3. **Identify and acknowledge Volunteer Nelson** as key agency

HEALTH Issues

The focus group agreed that a philosophy of understanding good health as underpinning social wellbeing was a useful platform for engaging, and recognising factors.

The group identified these specific **health issues** as significant barriers to SW:

- Alcohol abuse
- Air quality and respiratory conditions
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Chronic conditions
- Oral health

They acknowledged a range of other barriers:

- Income inequality
- High deprivation
- Lack of secure and sustainable housing
- Poor quality rental housing
- Inadequate funding to agencies doing key health and social service work which is aligned to NCC SW policy
- Lack of apparent connection between DHB, PHO and NCC and policy alignment
- Know about Talking Heads group – but what does it do in relation to health and social wellbeing?
- Access to services including youth
- agencies not supported appropriately to help people get housing
- replications of effort and resources between TDC and NCC
- info for people on what is available and how they get it.

The group identified **successful ways** of working

- Strong inter-agency links
- Creating positive referral pathways between agencies
- Cross sector communication between DHB, PHO, NCC, TDC (like Way2Go)
- NCC connecting and facilitating networking on issues e.g. C&W

Council's role

1. **Facilitate and oversee** relationships between providers, decision makers, NGO/Community & government – open communication across sectors
2. **Provide inter-forum meetings** when necessary for understanding relationships, developing and maintaining services – Found, C&W, Talking Heads, Housing Forum
3. **Resource community connectedness** to build stronger social wellbeing
4. **Facilitate effective and affordable heating** – outcome of cleaning the air
5. **Require rental housing** be legally compliant for safety and health
6. **Generate policies and practices** in conjunction with DHB and PHO to address issues of low income being the most important factor in poor health
7. **Identify and support** agencies who work to recognise the voices of marginalised people those of other languages; Pasifika; Disability, Deaf

Priorities

1. **Jointly address issues of low income** - work with EDA, Chamber, DHB and PHO - recognition that majority of jobs are low paid, unskilled and are therefore a health and therefore SW barrier
2. **Require rental housing** be legally compliant
3. **Facilitation and maintenance** of connectedness
4. **Inter-Council and Inter-Health communication** including the refocus of Talking Heads
5. **Alcohol management** – safety for all
6. **Ensure continued easy/free access** to recreational opportunities
7. **Ensure continuation of community arts programmes/activities**
8. **Reconvene Total Mobility Scheme**

HOUSING Issues

In a city where the incomes are lower than the national average affordability is an ongoing issue as access to secure and sustainable housing is a significant SW factor. This relates to both the purchase of homes and for rentals. The stock of lower income rental properties is known to be of poor quality.

Three community owned/charitable organisations were identified as successful providers of affordable and secure housing meeting a range of particular needs.

Nelson Tasman Housing Trust was acknowledged as a new and successful community provider of high quality, energy efficient, affordable and secure housing for low income families.

Abbeyfield is highly reputable and well established housing for only older people, affordable and secure, and also disability friendly.

Habitat for Humanity is another community housing provider helping low income families access rent to buy energy efficient and affordable homes.

The group discussed issues on the range of housing stock available and the dominance of NZ'rs using housing as investment which undermines the need of people for homes. NCC housing stock is low, and of poor quality despite upgrade planned for Orchard St. Council is encouraged to advocate to central government for greater funding to Nelson given the higher than average house and rental prices. Council can foster desire to change way we live; that it is desirable and acceptable to live in high quality community owned housing such as those agencies named above. Council could challenge developers to reduce covenants which restrict the range of housing available in new developments to encourage greater investment by community based housing.

It was suggested that Council consider making all building consents fit universal or lifetime design requirements as the demographics indicate a high increase of older i.e. low light switches, wider doorways and halls for wheelchair access, easy access kitchen. This policy shouldn't constrain options so that older houses can also be retrofitted.

Council can promote a wider range of housing models – more smaller, two bedroom units, multi-generational living in comprehensive developments, eco-village subdivisions etc. Concern was expressed in the number of HNZN homes which have people living alone. Advocate at central government level to change policies to ensure once children leave, other options are available.

The lack of capital gains tax encourages people to buy and sell to improve investments and income. This results in renters moving more frequently, creating disconnection and disturbance and undermining social wellbeing for all. While this policy remains (no capital tax) then other models such as community based housing create other opportunities and benefits which can significantly increase social wellbeing with no capital investment by NCC.

Emergency Housing

The group acknowledged the need and success of the collaborative approach to emergency housing, which sometimes includes visitors and temporary workers seeking accommodation. However there is high use of these units and very limited access for men with the Night Shelter offering limited support.

Council's role

1. **Invest further** in the long term benefits of the solar city initiative and clean heat warm homes.
2. **Identify community based housing organisations** as key partners to the provision of more affordable, secure and sustainable housing. This can be achieved by for example facilitating access to currently unused NCC land; waiving development contributions, reducing rates and consent costs, giving priority planning and consent pathways to comprehensive development schemes.
3. **Advocate** for further central government funds to improve current NCC housing stock and for community based projects
4. **Review the use of covenants** by developers which limit the diversity of housing models.
5. **Continue to facilitate** the Housing Forum, identifying some achievable goals and outcomes

Priorities

1. **Facilitate** the provision of affordable, high quality, sustainable, energy efficient housing
2. **Assess the need** for more short term emergency housing
3. **Develop policies and procedures** which ensure all housing for elderly is developed to "life-time" design
4. **Identify and work with agencies** to identify needs for housing for youth, especially unsupported youth
5. **Foster improved access** to land – rezoning, partnerships with landowners, use of council land, development rates rebate etc, to ensure increased provision of affordable housing
6. **Develop policies and incentives** to facilitate priority for any application which meets a range of criteria (life-time design, sustainability, energy efficiency which improves social wellbeing

SAFETY Issues

5 key areas were identified by the focus group

Disability

Transport within Nelson City Council

- Need transport information on Council websites - access for wheelchairs, and links for wheelchair access on transport
- Employment concerns - Council to promote work experience for those with disabilities
- Need for more pre-schools to provide for children with disabilities
 - Special swing at Lions playground – kept locked: need to advertise where to get key from (no path to the swing?)
 - Wheelchair access paths into play areas
 - Kerbs on Bridge and Trafalgar St. (Westpac crossing) – needs to be smooth. Currently this has a few lips and dips.
 - All new planning and standard design to ensure easy wheelchair access
 - Public toilets – make maps available for disability toilets, Montgomery square acceptable, Buxton is not.

Family Violence

Council is encouraged to identify key partners to support the development of policies and training for family violence (FV) in workplaces. Council is applauded for becoming a signatory to Te Rito MOU and can easily promote that it is actively supporting the reduction of family violence, through their knowledge and networking between agencies, which is supporting our children, seeking to keep all families safe, breaking the isolation and silence that can accompany FV. One suggestion is having Council housing monitored about potential situations through the tenancy contract.

Design of communities

The recent Central City Strategy was acknowledged as offering many new design ideas to improve safety in the CBD. To last for future as well – esp. in relation to the aged population & design of facilities now to suit them down the track.

- Council encouraged to get various NCC departments liaising closely around design to ensure more is included about disability needs, safety, use of services by aged and physically vulnerable residents.

Council is applauded and encouraged for having alcohol and drug bans in place and also at some events.

Identify and support key partners for ensuring our reputation as a safe city continue. Increase support for community based initiatives such as Neighbourhood Support, Maori Wardens that contribute to community cohesion and support and thus SW.

Removal and retrieval of broken glass around the city remains an issue throughout the CBD. Promote the NCC hotline for clean-ups.

Council's role

1. **Planning, implementing and measuring** outcomes of resources to support those with disabilities.
2. **Actively participate** in Te Rito forums
3. **Council has role in facilitating** connections between stakeholder groups like Safer Communities Council, Neighbourhood Support, WHO Safer Communities, Maori Wardens, HYPE etc.

Priorities

1. **Identify and engage key partner organisations** that support those with disabilities
2. **Continue to actively participate** in supporting Te Rito forums (and specific agencies as needed).
3. **Co-produce** in the design of disability access in facilities.

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS Issues

Disability – Many of the issues identified under Safety group were echoed in this group. 1 in 5 people in Nelson are disabled which reduces social connectedness. Easy access to facilities and inclusion in events, services, activities and programmes is vital for SW. People with disabilities need advocates and provision of better infrastructure - hoists and wheelchairs at swimming pools. Streets and kerbing design still needs improving to include space for wheelchair unloading.

Council needs to acknowledge the key partners (such as **Lifeline**) which receive calls daily from the socially disconnected. Community organisations such as **House 44, Tahunanui** and **Victory Community Centre** were identified as also especially contributing to this SW work. The group identified a need for more strategic funding for these organisations. Victory Community Centre, even though a highly successful new organisation, is still financially vulnerable and yet is doing this vital work well. This model of connection to the school is proving to be of national significance, and it was suggested that Council facilitate this into other neighbourhoods around Nelson.

The group suggested that Council audit of groups to identify various stakeholders of all levels of SW work and that this include a gaps and overlaps analysis.

Funding allocation at funders outcomes – social connectedness is about issues between areas. A review of the Community Assistance Fund be undertaken to achieve more targeted support in the community, which will result in more flexibility, broader SW outcomes.

Intergenerational connectedness – Council could create links between boyracers and Greypower to address that particular issue. Council could encourage identified agencies to build youth resiliency by promoting adult neighbours talking to youth and engaging them to help in activities.

The group agreed that planning needed to ensure that there are no "ghettos of poor" and gated rich which leads to SW breakdown and disconnection for all. They affirmed the need for mixed communities that included extended families, mixed ethnicities, low income and high that are welcoming, and promoting and encouraging of neighbourhood activities such as street parties to enhance connections. Social connectedness is high in Victory and needs to translated elsewhere.

The group identified the most vulnerable to disconnection and isolation as those who are: deaf, have English as second language; unemployed, youth, those in transition and the house-bound. Improved public transport can support the breakdown of these barriers.

Multiple cultures. Interconnectedness needs to be horizontally and vertically. Youth need horizontal and minimum of 6 adults with positive influence on their lives. Need to connect older with younger. Students linked to help elderly or deaf or others.

Integrating community housing developments within existing neighbourhoods that include the elderly and all others.

Council's role

1. City design/NRMP

Urban design very important – guiding developers to reduce social costs. Requirements for access to all that a community needs - can't just rely on a car. Think through all facilities, reserves and more. "Village green" like Victory, gathering spaces. Natural ways to connect, creating opportunities for connectedness.

2. Assessing design needs of those with disabilities in conjunction with agencies mandated for this work.

3. Offer proactive support of intergenerational connections to break down disconnections. Actively encourage schools to be venues for whole community activities and meetings

4. Councillors attend Positive Ageing Forum, Youth Forum as well as appropriate NCC staff.

5. Identify all key stakeholders doing SW work and assess gaps

6. **Sharing views with Council/connected to Council**

Make it easier for people to share views for those not so confident. More use of technology - text, face book, and easy language.

7. **Neighbourhood building**

Identify those key partner organisations who are already building community in small areas and work with them to promote social connections via NCC website.

Priorities

1. **Liase and seek support** from agencies before, and during urban design processes that affects those with disabilities.
2. **Create opportunities** in conjunction with agencies for proactive support on intergenerational connections.
3. **Councillors and staff** attend forums.
4. **Identify all stakeholders** and clarify NCC relation to each.

EMERGING Issues

1. Strengthening Families identify key issues for families referred to them as: social isolation; parenting; child management; family disconnection; lack of support; school based behaviours. The group agreed these are all barriers to SW.
2. The group also acknowledged the number of **international students** and the need for greater support, especially as they are often experiencing **racism in public** spaces. The recent Racism Project was applauded to begin to address this issue. NCC to work with NMIT to establishing current data on international students – numbers, countries of origin.
3. **High deprivation** due to low incomes were acknowledged as significant stressor due to the effects of the global economic downturn which are now increasing.
4. **NZ culture** as distinct from other cultures is showing signs of little or no respect for elders; some older people are afraid and/or unable to set and hold clear boundaries in relation to others; lack of stable family structure unlike other cultures.
5. Recognition of the effects of cuts to **adult community education** programmes and their effect on social connectedness and general wellbeing. Council could be advocating to find alternative funding.
6. **Older adults** are vulnerable to isolation; changing demographics; effects of income dependence by Council on rates and the current NCC business model.
7. **Youth issues including bullying** in schools of which there is perception that some schools are not addressing adequately. Many of the issues were also identified and engaged in the Economic Standard of Living focus group. Youth issues need to be addressed in wider context and not isolated with just youth oriented agencies. NCC can support/facilitate engagement across the sectors.
7. There are agreed challenges for Nelson with the increasing ageing and rapidly diversifying population.
8. Parents fearful of engaging about parenting and school based behaviours. Suggestion of a parenting hub as a central resource for families, not just those in need or crisis.
9. **Accessibility to outdoor activities** which are limited by lack of public transport.

Council's role:

1. Identify and support key stakeholders to promote and facilitate – events like specific C&W meeting; inter-agency links especially between government, crown and community agencies.

2. Promote volunteering as a way to get and stay connected and contribute to social wellbeing for all.
3. Make list available of all venues suitable for holding community meetings. Rooms to be free (or low cost) for community groups to use e.g. activity room in library.
3. Provides leadership on promoting positive perceptions in relation to safety in the city, ageism, racism, give examples and models of what is acceptable and encouraged.
4. Improve information put out by NCC, by making more accessible – lower the reading age, include more images to better meet everyone's needs e.g. refugees, disabled people.
5. Council staff need to working directly with key partner organisations e.g. Community Development Liaison-Youth needs to working with those who deal with youth issues, not just with Youth Council.
6. NCC to identify and work with all relevant agencies as key partners in specific areas of SW work, creating opportunities for improved collaboration between agencies as much as specifically on the issues.

Priorities

- 1. Identify and support** key stakeholders
- 2. Continue promoting and providing meeting venues** for community groups.

Responses to the Implementation Report

A focus group of 4 workers within community and government agencies met with the facilitator to share concerns and ideas about the implementation of the existing policy. They gave responses to the recently published assessment report and then contributed ideas and recommendations about a possible way forward.

While there were many specific details about the various goals identified in the policy they can be summarised with the following points:

- ◆ Monitoring of the outcomes since the inception of the SWP has been inadequate
- ◆ Much of the language was fuzzy and open to many interpretations – the word 'support' was used frequently but unclear about what was the nature of that support – financial, leadership, advocacy etc.
- ◆ Significant opportunities have been missed to advocate and support national and regional funding to the region – especially in relation to social housing and transport
- ◆ Many goals had no specific actions that related to their implementation – e.g.: 4.2, 4.4, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, and 5.7. Goal 4.1 could have goals such as 'improve quality of rental housing available', or 'increase supply of affordable housing, by facilitating speedy planning and resource consent process to social housing agencies
- ◆ Assessment did not include what or how it was assessed
- ◆ No clear milestones on some goals that could have had quantitative monitoring in support of the assessments
- ◆ Some of the lower priority areas received the highest level of resources – 1.5 FTE NCC staff is allocated in one area, and 1 FTE is allocated to 4 others.
- ◆ Goals could include specific quantitative gains – e.g.: support social housing to be increased from 2% - national average of 5%

- ◆ No evidence that councillors are advocating at high levels of government to support wellbeing goals
- ◆ Some goals require staff at high levels of NCC who have extensive experience in wider sectors of community and who have strategic overview – e.g. goal 4.3
- ◆ Inequity is apparent in funding allocated to community facilities and recreational events – goal 5.1. E.g. amount of funding to Multi-Cultural Council for Race Unity Day significantly less than other summer festival events run by NCC.
- ◆ Regional facilities such as BBQ at Tahunanui Park, is not a local community facility and should not have been funded as such.
- ◆ NCC needs to address the apparent duplication of resources and role of the Settlement Project with the work of the Multi-Cultural Council and Refugee Services.
- ◆ Current data needs to be gathered on Nelson's Maori populations, with a framework for engaging and actions to improve networks for those Maori who do not have iwi affiliation – Goal 5.5.
- ◆ Monitoring needs to be addressed and linked with the document and its review.
- ◆ NCC needs to engage a community development process in all community agency dealings and eliminate the liaison focus that has predominated in the last 4 years.

The group identified a number of particular situations that have occurred and how they could be located within the map which was developed below. A **Stakeholder Analysis** would help identify the 'force field' into which agencies fit and examine ways to improve relations across the whole community.

Examples of **resistance** encountered by agencies –

- NCC signing onto the Te Rito network
- Setting up of the Te Rito flags for the promotion of the new network and the 49+ agencies that are actively engaged in reducing family violence.
- Canterbury Community Trust bringing \$2M of housing funds to the region and no partnership or collaboration was engaged in the leveraging of NCC funds or community involvement.
- Settlement Project being located in NCC offices rather than based in the community.

Example of **passive** engagement –

- House 44 could have been supported to receive NZTA Community Transport Funds for a van for clients to attend events, services
- Nelson Tasman Housing Forum while facilitated by Council, does not actively engage the housing issues, rather offers only an opportunity for community people to report on what they are working on.

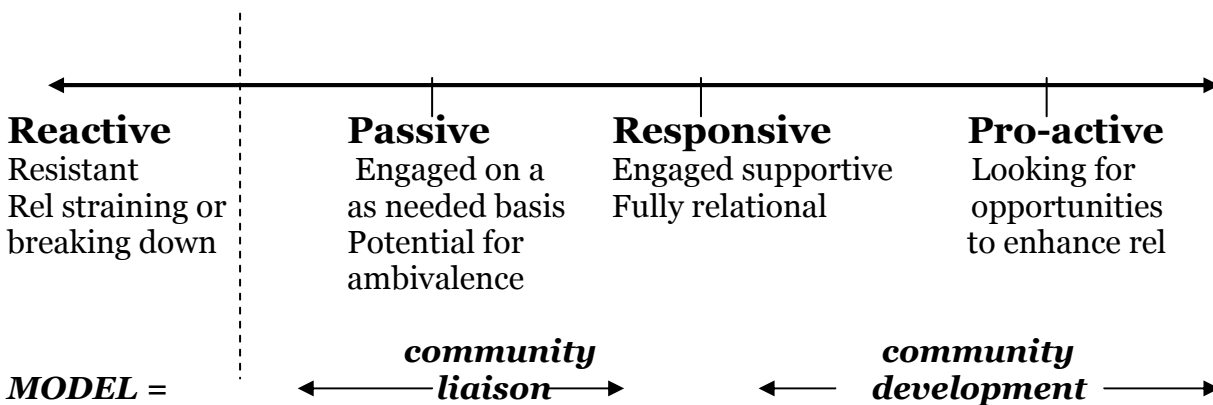
Examples of **responsive engagement** –

- Nelson Tasman Housing Trust securing a joint venture over land in the Brook Valley.

- Allocating funding to the Housing Strategy – although not yet developed there is considerable interest in Council defining its role in relation to all housing issues. Concern was expressed that if Housing stays within the SW policy only those issues will be addressed rather than all that relate to consents, building, developers, land use, urban design that may well relate to infrastructure, environmental and economic policies.

The group also commented on a comparison of Social Wellbeing Policy's from another Council and recognised the need to identify those particular agencies whose mission and work aligns consistently with the stated Social Wellbeing Policy outcomes within the document. Measurable outcomes were also noted within the body of the Policy to ensure accountability at all levels. (Comparison document was Hamilton City Council's SW Policy.)

RESPONSE MODEL



DEFINITIONS -Community development:

1. Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing these groups with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities.
2. A set of values and practices which plays a special role in overcoming poverty and disadvantage, knitting society together at the grass roots and deepening democracy.
3. The process of developing active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about supporting community members to influence power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives.
4. Community workers (officers) facilitate the participation of people in this process. They enable connections to be made between communities and with the development of wider policies and programmes.
5. Community Development expresses values of fairness, equality, accountability, opportunity, choice, participation, mutuality, reciprocity and continuous learning. Educating, enabling and empowering are at the core of Community Development.

While NCC is a power structure, any community development work undertaken by NCC officers with community agencies is about enriching organisations knowledge and relationship to NCC

so that barriers to better participation, collaboration, and the 'there's only us who live here that can make the difference together' philosophy which empowers all.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All 7 focus groups in some order of suggested priority

- ◆ **Identify and acknowledge** in the Policy document all key partner agencies who are delivering services aligned to the Social Wellbeing Policy. It is recommended this be done through a Stakeholder and Force Field Analysis, with appropriate commitments to allocated funding.
- ◆ **Overhaul** the Community Assistance Fund (CAF) consistent with the Stakeholder Analysis. CAF becomes only a funder for low, one-off grants to smaller organisations for specific project work that fits NCC wider mandate.
- ◆ **Facilitate** the increase of **social** housing stock through **fostering** improved access to land, and creating policies to reduce developments costs.
- ◆ **Incentivise** the provision of affordable, high quality, sustainable, energy efficient housing for all Nelson.
- ◆ **Advocate** to central government for resources, policy changes and funding for arenas such as migrants and refugee case management, social housing, rental compliance.
- ◆ **Acknowledge and engage volunteers** and their power to contribute to social wellbeing
- ◆ **Jointly** address issues of low incomes with EDA, Chamber, DHB and PHO recognising that most work is low paid, unskilled and is therefore a significant SW barrier.
- ◆ **Develop** Inter-Council and Inter-Health communication (including the refocus of Talking Heads).
- ◆ **Collect the data** to understand the increasing ethnic diversity of our community, promoting the changing demographics as a positive force in our community.
- ◆ **Develop policies and procedures** which ensure all housing for elderly is developed to "life-time" design.
- ◆ **Identify partner agencies** to clarify needs for youth, and increased emergency housing
- ◆ **Maintain** current alcohol management to support a safe city for all.
- ◆ **Ensure** continued easy/free access to recreational opportunities
- ◆ **Ensure** continuation of community arts programmes/activities
- ◆ **Reconvene** Total Mobility Scheme
- ◆ Continue to **actively participate** in supporting Te Rito forums (and specific agencies as needed).
- ◆ **Develop policy and procedures** to ensure co-production in the design of disability access in all NCC facilities.
- ◆ Councillors AND staff **attend** forums.

2. Implementation Assessment group

- ◆ Stakeholder analysis to especially identify those organisations which are aligned to the wellbeing outcomes defined in the policy.
- ◆ Contracts be offered to those agencies for services as a pathway to implementation of outcomes with appropriate and equitable funding.
- ◆ Abandon the Community Assistance Fund and align funding in budget lines consistent with the stakeholder analysis
- ◆ Clearly identify the relationship that NCC has with all stakeholders in relation to the policy. This could include even naming departments and staff of NCC to more clearly identify roles in relation to issues within SWP.
- ◆ Some agencies could be identified as lead agency around particular issues with supporting agencies that are related to that issue and clearly identifying Council's relationship within that goal.
- ◆ Use a regular monitoring tool such as Results Based Accountability, plus implement a 3 year review
- ◆ NCC staff time and funding allocated according to the priority identified within SW policy
- ◆ Allocate appropriately senior staff to the various forums to ensure decisions and implementation of strategic focus required to some policy goals
- ◆ NCC does not fund festivals and events, rather supports (financial and organisational) existing organisations to raise profile and capacity of businesses and agencies. Take a strength based approach and build further strength through careful, strategic allocation of resources.
- ◆ Management of contracts to ensure accessibility for all residents and not equal to private enterprise. e.g. prices for Aqua Centre are more affordable
- ◆ Full agreement with the New Hub model of funding and support. However, other organisations working on high priority social areas such as Victory Community Centre should be funded at similar and more equitable levels.
- ◆ The Safer Community Council way of working is well supported and highly effective.
- ◆ Build capacity of community organisations to manage services such as Settlement Support, NT Global Football.
- ◆ Provide evidence of data and indicators that underpin SWP

FINAL COMMENTS

Nelson has a rapidly diversifying population and while contributing to some social wellbeing challenges is overall creating enriched economic, cultural and social benefits.

Housing all our residents in accommodation which meets their financial and social needs continues to be a considerable challenge and is identified as a significant factor in less than ideal social wellbeing for many. While it is a complex arena with multiple factors, there are some identified avenues for change that this report identifies.

Nelson also experiences a lower than national average income. This combined with higher than national average housing and rental expenses provides ongoing challenges in terms of social wellbeing. This report from the health and social sector has identified a wide range of priorities to address these challenges.

Council's role is viewed as being one of providing **leadership; facilitation; overseeing; research; advocacy; fostering; accountability.**

**Kindra Douglas with support from Brigid Ryan
January 2010**