



RESPONSE to the Auckland Council

Discussion Paper:

AUCKLAND UNLEASHED

Paper 042/11

Prepared on behalf of COMET trustees by Bernardine Vester, May 2011

Whakatauki

E kore e taea e te whenu kotahi
ki te raranga i te whāriki
kia mōhio tātou ki ā tātou.
Mā te mahi tahi o ngā whenu,
mā te mahi tahi o ngā kairaranga,
ka oti tōnei whāriki.
I te otinga
me titiro tātou ki ngā mea pai ka puta mai.
Ā tana wā,
me titiro hoki
ki ngā raranga i makere
nā te mea, he kōrero ano kei reira.

The tapestry of understanding
cannot be woven by one strand alone.
Only by the working together of strands
and the working together of weavers
will such a tapestry be completed.
With its completion
let us look at the good that comes from it
and, in time
we should also look
at those stitches which have been dropped,
because they also have a message.

About COMET

COMET is a Legacy Council Controlled Organisation (Trust CCO) under the Local Government Act 2002. COMET became a CCO of the Auckland Council on 1 November 2010. The Trust has an agreement with the Council to deliver analysis and advocacy for education; the Trust also provides co-ordination and facilitation of projects that make a difference to education outcomes in the city.

Feedback development process

This response has been prepared with input from over 400 people based on consultation meetings and focus groups with stakeholders in education and individuals and organisations in our networks.

Executive Summary

An economic growth strategy based on knowledge and innovation is essential to Auckland's long term prosperity. In 30 years time we hope the education infrastructure of Auckland is delivering hope, a high quality system connected to communities, and clear pathways for school leavers, youth and adults to meaningfully connect to the workforce and contribute to Auckland's productivity and economic future.

The recommendations in this submission will help to realise this 30 year vision.

1. Auckland Council's vision for Auckland education should be consistent with, but bolder, than the government's vision and outcomes for the education sector. It should be that **Education will transform Auckland's economic and social landscape**
2. There is **significant support** for establishing Auckland goals for education and having a set of targets that education sectors can aspire to.
3. We suggest four goals as the basis for further conversation:
 - **Access to quality early learning for all families in all areas**
 - **Every school-leaver with NCEA Level 2**
 - **Zero youth unemployment**
 - **Raise productivity by improving adult literacy and numeracy competencies**
4. Establish the **structures** through which Council contributions to the vision can be delivered; and the **processes** by which actions can be determined and implemented.
5. An **Auckland Skills Framework** is needed to more powerfully connect education, skills and economic development.
6. Local Boards could **lead the way in developing and implementing 21 Local Education Plans**. Other Council structures (the Maori Statutory Board, the Pacific Island Advisory Panel, the Youth Council, the libraries) have a role in shaping action on the goals and monitoring outcomes.
7. **Include families** in the priority for children.
8. Low levels of adult literacy and numeracy in Auckland are recognised as a brake on our economic performance and on social cohesion. The city needs **a deliberate drive to improve literacy, language and numeracy**.
9. Establish a Learning hub in the South Opportunity area to **create a centre for economic development and skills growth** – to grow global importance as the hub of the South Pacific.

The education and skills vision for Auckland

To translate the city's overarching vision "The world's most liveable city" into something that will connect with social action, *Auckland Unleashed* proposes: "A city where quality of life means every citizen has the opportunity to reach their potential." And this requires quality education.

It will be important to connect this vision with the government's education goals and key sector statements (Appendix 2).

We need a simple and direct vision for Auckland education that is consistent with, but bolder, than those described in government documents. As well as responding to Māori economic development aspirations, and Pacific impatience with current system responses to learning for Pacific children, the vision should ensure that adults as well as children have the opportunity to learn and contribute to Auckland's future. The vision could be: **Education - transforming Auckland's economic and social landscape.**

The goals should be transformational in purpose and effect, inclusive of those currently left out of the economic mainstream, and relate to the evidence base that already exists about key challenges and opportunities in the city:

- Access to quality early learning for all families in all areas
- Every school-leaver with NCEA Level 2
- Zero youth unemployment
- Raise productivity by improving adult literacy and numeracy competencies

Education for Transformation: Why Auckland Council should be involved in education

The government's \$4 billion of education expenditure in Auckland can be more effectively deployed to deliver Auckland's vision. Council has

A bold education vision that addresses Maori economic development aspirations and Pacific impatience with progress.

**Auckland Council:
a champion for learning;
a catalyst for educational change**

already recognised that skills are vital to economic development and that the quality of education impacts on economic and social outcomes.

Some of our education system operates extremely successfully. But to increase city prosperity and raise productivity we have to tackle the wide disparities in educational achievement across the city. Auckland is troubled by truancy rates, young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and changing economic conditions that result in skills shortages. Auckland's social challenges are hidden underneath generic data; pockets of poverty and disadvantage impact on the economic life of the city and everyone's lives. Tackling this task is not one for central government alone.

City leadership supported by education stakeholders

We applaud the Council's demonstrated interest in education and skills, including infrastructure, workforce planning, literacy through libraries etc. However, the city would benefit from Council taking a more coherent and driving role.

The contribution of education to local communities is already implied in Local Board agreements with Council e.g. in building safer communities or skills for a thriving local economy.

The consensus from our consultations is that Mayoral leadership and Council contributions can provide a catalyst for significant shifts in education outcomes.

Community Engagement in Education

Good community governance is a deliberate **process of engagement** of all those who can impact on the solution, and **structures** that support action. It is not appropriate to go straight to the solutions – **there needs to be community consultation on and ownership of education goals in the Auckland Plan**. Imposed action removes engagement in decision-making.

Council processes

Auckland Unleashed is silent on structures that are still developing: the Social Policy Forum, the roles of the CCOs for education and economic development; the role of Local Boards; and the processes that could be put in place to ensure community ownership and sector involvement.

The role of Local Boards

Local Boards play an important role in developing community buy-in to educational initiatives. This locally-driven, locally-owned change needs to be well supported by evidence-based analysis, Local Board leaders and staff with the skills and resources to develop a consensus on goals and actions. The Local Board is well positioned to champion action, monitor progress, and own outcomes.

For example, achieving an equitable participation rate in early learning in Papakura, Manurewa, Otara-Papatoetoe, Tamaki local board areas *that matches the rate* for other local board areas (e.g., Devonport-Takapuna or Howick-Pakuranga) could be an appropriate medium-term goal for Local Boards.

Auckland needs a clear vision for education and skills and 21 Local Education plans to help deliver it.

The Māori Statutory Board and Pacific Island Advisory Board will both play a critical role in ensuring Māori and Pasifika communities are engaged in the education and skills vision for Auckland; and have an important role in establishing crisp, simple goals.

Involving youth in their future is important if we are to harness their energy and expertise and keep them here. The role of the Auckland Youth Council and the establishment of vibrant youth networks in Local Boards should be an important component of the Auckland Plan.

COUNCIL ACTION: Use the Social Policy Forum to inspire educational targets that contribute to both economic and social wellbeing.

COUNCIL ACTION: Local Boards should champion education in their communities, collaboratively developing a local education plan supporting the city's goals, setting targets, progress indicators, and implementing action.

COUNCIL ACTION: Local boards, together with the Māori Statutory Board, the Pacific Island Advisory Board and the Auckland Youth Council can facilitate local Community Education Forums, providing an opportunity for creating collective community ownership of change.

**Local Boards :
champions of
education and skills
in their local
communities**

**Engage Maori,
Pacific
Youth structures
and the library
network of Council
in setting goals and
monitoring
outcomes**

Families first: the platform for success

Educational success starts early in the family

It is laudable that Strategic Priority One in “Shaping a new direction for Auckland’s quality of life” is to put children and young people first. All children should have access to services that meet their needs; and the city has responsibility to ensure that the wellbeing of children is catered for everywhere.

The importance of whanau in achieving educational success also needs to be recognised. The inter-generational transmission of educational success and failure is well understood. The qualifications of parents (especially the mother) are closely linked to the achievements of children. Adults with low literacy are less able to help their children and the children are more likely to have low literacy skills. Outcomes for children and youth are determined by their families.

We propose that the priority is expanded to include children, young people and families.

The educational and social success of children is enhanced by ensuring parents understand the education system, have the skills to help their children learn and have local opportunities for learning skills to enhance both their parenting skills and their employability.

Present initiatives that use the context of families to build both parenting and employability skills fall between the cracks of government funding streams. **Council should not perpetuate this silo approach to children and their families.**

Early childhood education

We endorse the signal in *Auckland Unleashed* that early learning matters, acknowledging that this occurs in families and communities, not just educational centres.

The city needs aspirational targets for areas where ECE participation is low, which tend to mirror areas where parental levels of education are low and there are complex social issues. Average participation rates hide pockets of very low participation, reducing the effectiveness of action and spreading scarce resources more widely.

A better target could be to **establish a service benchmark that all**

children and their families should be entitled to – i.e. access to quality early learning for all families in all areas.

Focus ECE targets on equitable outcomes for all children

This partnership on ECE needs to ensure that services reflect the needs of communities and the expressed needs of families; including home-based and community services as well as formal ECE centres. Tracking is necessary to identify and address inequities.

We endorse the call for multi-service hubs to meet family needs, providing learning is considered a key service. Hubs (whether school or community based) need facilities, staffing and programmes that focus on learning in and for families.

The Council's own actions in early childhood services need to be cohesively supported by a policy that informs how Council invests in early learning. Ideas include: streamlining approval processes for new ECEs, especially where the need is greatest; planning transport routes and timetables to facilitate access to ECE; making council land available for ECE in high-need areas; making council buildings available at very low cost to playgroups and other informal ECE.

COUNCIL ACTION: Position all initiatives for children and young people within a family and whanau framework. Advocate for government commitment to family learning policy that supports intergenerational cycles of success.

COUNCIL ACTION: Nurture ECE networks; grow quality learning opportunities in family, community and centre-based services.

COUNCIL ACTION: Use the Social Policy Forum to partner with government and communities to put ECE services into high need areas.

COUNCIL ACTION: Advocate for government commitment to family learning policy that supports intergenerational cycles of success.

Linking schools, families and communities

The participants at the Auckland Education Summit were clear: a more unified approach to education in Auckland is possible. The conversation between schools, families and communities needs to be supported through Council's leadership and commitment to goals. Communities have a lot to offer schools.

International evidence of successful large-scale efforts to transform outcomes from schooling systems involves a **robust structure** (advisory group, drivers whose job it is to co-ordinate action) and **processes** (consultative, inclusive) that enables cohesive action and monitoring. The importance of clear structures and processes that enable connections to be made cannot be overplayed.

Skills in Auckland: school leavers; youth; adults

Auckland Unleashed puts an economic development priority on growing Aucklanders' skills, education and training, especially amongst youth.

Youth are our future workforce. The disparities for those young people with qualifications (mostly European and Asian) and those without (Māori and Pacific youth are over-represented) are growing. Substantial policy and programme initiatives have been established to assist this latter group, but sustainable improvements have not been observed.

In 2010 in New Zealand, 28% of Māori youth and 29.4% of Pacific youth were unemployed. These percentages are highly reflective of the Auckland work force. The recession has dramatically affected youth unemployment. In Auckland it's much harder for youth, school-leavers in particular, to find a job than previously.

International evidence from Europe shows that just growing the economy doesn't address the issues related to youth employability.

Achievement in school

Almost 3,000 young people leave school with no qualifications. The city needs to set high targets for schooling achievement. Level 2 NCEA is the entry-level point for most post-school destinations; a shift from the old School Certificate leaving point at 15.

Set higher school-leaver targets: every school-leaver with NCEA Level 2

In 2009 75.5% of school-leavers gained NCEA Level 2 or above but there is a substantial range of achievement across the city; for example only 49% of Māori school leavers achieved NCEA Level 2 or above.

Every school-leaver should have NCEA Level 2. This target requires a whole-of-system, whole-of-community response. Every early childhood centre, school, family, church and community, and business can contribute to this target. **Establish a robust structure for collaborative leadership, setting of milestones and measures, and co-ordination of action.**

All young people should be involved in education, training, or work. **Nothing less than zero youth unemployment should be our city goal.**

Transitions and pathways

Work readiness and career literacy¹ skills are important for helping our young people have a destination to aspire to and a planned skill pathway, yet these processes are not embedded in educational curriculum and school culture. The visibility and focus on vocational alternatives needs to be adequately supported by professional career advisors available to all Auckland schools. Regional professional careers teams would add value.

There are many excellent vocational initiatives (Youth Guarantee, Gateway, STAR, modern apprenticeships etc) but the city would benefit from strategic cohesiveness and more effective use of the allocated resources. There is no single Auckland monitoring agency that understands the outcomes of the local transition and career education initiatives.

Connecting the economy and education

There is a disconnect between the skills that schools are developing and those that industry needs. There are not enough highly skilled people for our future workforce and we have too many under-skilled people. We need to understand how we can connect the under-skilled group to the economic

The city needs a coherent approach to skills development...

..and adult learning

future of Auckland and we need to retain our highly skilled workforce.

To illustrate this dilemma, the age band for Modern Apprenticeships is very narrow and Māori, Pacific Islanders and women (who are all poorly represented here) would benefit if they were able to begin apprenticeships at a later age. Mobility is a feature of newly-qualified skilled people; we need to ensure that employment opportunities, housing, transport, and lifestyle factors are sufficiently attractive to keep them here.

Many adults with low literacy are not ready to access formal institutions. These second chance learners need community programmes that enable them to earn while they learn and gain the confidence to pathway into formal learning. Adult learners have rich life experiences, great community networks, are here to stay and want to make a difference to their whanau and communities. Investing in this sector has a huge impact on the wider community, as one student can become a role model, mentor and educator within their whanau.

¹ Career literacy is awareness of the importance of subject choices; levels of skills required post-school; personal confidence in making choices; knowledge of the kinds of jobs that are 'out there'; understanding the values of the workplace; young people understanding their own identity and contribution to community.

An **Auckland Skills Framework** could deliver a coherent approach to action on skills development across the city.

An Accord with government would strengthen Council's efforts to create such a framework and would leverage central government commitment and local resource needed to operate across the city, and at the Local Board level.

Examples of action would be to implement the recommendations from the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs on Modern Apprenticeships Report 2010 and work closer with ITOs.

Develop an Accord with government and create an Auckland Skills Framework

COUNCIL ACTION: Develop an Accord with government and an Auckland Skills Framework to deliver leadership and set targets for skills growth.

COUNCIL ACTION: Lead a cohesive skill and work strategy for growth, attraction and retention of young adults. Prepare for the dynamic workforce needed to respond to the next global waves of transformative technology and urban environmental challenges.

COUNCIL ACTION: Set high targets for school leavers, i.e. NCEA Level 2.

COUNCIL ACTION: Take a lead role in creating a coherent system for vocational education and monitoring its achievements. Expect every school leaver to have a unique destination map.

COUNCIL ACTION: Align agencies and service organisations that facilitate capacity building in support school/tertiary/business sector partnerships.

Unlocking Auckland's Potential: Literacy, language and numeracy vision for Auckland

Low levels of adult literacy and numeracy in Auckland are now well documented (see references) and are recognised as a brake on our economic performance and on social cohesion. There are over 410,000 adults with low literacy and 470,000 with low numeracy in our city.

As Auckland becomes increasingly multi-cultural, the strengths of

The city needs a deliberate drive to improve literacy, language and numeracy

diversity need to be recognised in the environmental, economic and social and cultural planning frameworks of the city. Developing sufficient English language support is a priority so new Aucklanders can utilise their skills and talents to fully participate in employment in the city.

Nurture language and heritage as Auckland's point of difference and an economic asset

Our population is multi-lingual and this linguistic heritage has value. Sustaining language and heritage – particularly our indigenous and Pacific ones – should be a Community Development principle underpinning the city's planning. Council should take a strong advocacy role in supporting community aspirations to use identity to shape learning, entrepreneurial action, and lifestyle.

COUNCIL ACTION: Be a champion for workplace learning. Literacy contributes powerfully to productivity growth.

COUNCIL ACTION: Lead a cohesive and deliberate drive to improve the literacy, language and numeracy levels of those in work and those seeking to be work ready.

COUNCIL ACTION: Work with government and businesses to increase the English language learning opportunities for new Aucklanders.

COUNCIL ACTION: Advocate for the maintenance and support of language as a Community Development principle.

COUNCIL ACTION: Build export potential through our migrant communities.

Spatial Plan: opportunity areas

The development of three focused spatial Opportunity Areas has merit. The distinctiveness of each area needs to be supported by the educational infrastructure that exists there. The development of a Learning Quarter in the centre of Auckland has economic development advantages in situating Auckland as an international model of educational excellence. Growing Auckland's reputation for high skills development is already understood. The export potential of education will be particularly relevant to future markets in Asia and the Americas.

Equally important is the economic development opportunity arising from the Southern Opportunity area. The location of educational facilities and educational support services is crucially important. The co-location of services and support networks for education that specifically targets Māori and Pacific learning and workforce development in the south is a pre-requisite for growth across the whole region. Establishing Auckland's reputation as a centre of excellence that drives the economies of the

South Pacific requires a concentration of people and businesses that can identify with and support the aspirations of the region. This hub is already emerging in the Manukau city area, and is ripe for more focused planning.

COUNCIL ACTION: Plan for the development of a Learning Hub in the Southern Opportunity area (Manukau) as a skills growth area and a centre for economic development.

Conclusion

For Auckland to be a world class city, we need to have an educated and knowledgeable population. Learning starts from the earliest years and continues right through adulthood. Creating an education infrastructure that supports all Aucklanders in their learning, in particular meeting the needs of those whose potential is currently unrealised will enable the city to deliver on its 30 year social and economic vision of “the world’s most liveable city”.

Over the last 10 years COMET has gathered much of the evidence to support the above recommendations including the preparation of a number of highly strategic discussion papers exploring innovative structures and processes for successful implementation. The above response is high-level, and about the *what*. We look forward to being able to contribute further as to *how* the aspirations of the Auckland Plan can be implemented.



Bernardine Vester
Chief Executive
31 May 2011

APPENDIX 1

This document has been developed with input from trustees and a wide range of people and interest groups, over a period of nearly two years. Recommendations have been tested in a variety of forums as follows. Notes from most of these meetings can be found on COMET's website - www.comet.org.nz

The New Auckland: School-Business Relationships and Skills. A forum held at the TelstraClearPacific Events Centre, June 23 2010. 48 attendees by invitation. Gateway Coordinators from schools; not-for-profit leaders operating programmes in the school-business space; representatives from the EMA, AUT, Committee for Auckland.

Education in the City: An encounter. February 16, 2011. Over 100 people from schools, early childhood education, tertiary education, Auckland Council and businesses attended this forum. It was accompanied by the release of *A Snapshot of Auckland's Education Landscape, 2011.*

Education and the Auckland Plan: A consultation hui held at Waipuna Conference Centre, April 20, 2011. Open invitation. Attended by approximately 80 people.

Auckland Education Summit. Held in partnership with the Cognition Institute on May 11, 2011, at the Auckland Museum. Over 180 attendees by invitation, representing a broad range of education stakeholders. Feedback reports have been sent to the Mayor and government ministers.

Manukau ECE Taskforce meetings; a meeting between ECE representatives from Manukau, Waitakere and Tamaki with Council Staff *Education in Waitakere Hui.* A consultation held at Henderson Council offices on May 24, 2011. Open invitation. Attended by approximately 30 people.

Focus Group: ITOs. A meeting of CEOs of Auckland based ITOs, on 18 May 2011. By invitation, 10 attendees.

The inaugural meeting of an *Auckland Pasifika Education Steering Group* on May 4, 2011. By invitation. Representatives from 13 different education and industry organisations attended.

SOURCE MATERIAL

COMET (2011): *A Snapshot of Auckland's Education Landscape*

Frank and Frank and Judy Solomon, 2011: *State of the Nation.* Unpublished paper.

Kopu B. (2010) *Modern Apprenticeships: An analysis of the current challenges and opportunities facing the Modern Apprenticeship programme in New Zealand.* BMK Group and Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs

Sutton A., Vester B. (2010): *Unlocking Auckland's Potential: Adult literacy and numeracy skills in the new Auckland.* COMET working paper 035/10

Vester, B. (2008): 'Education and Local Government Working Together: a community governance approach'. Institute of Policy Studies, *Policy Quarterly*, March 2008.
<http://ips.ac.nz/publications/publications/show/223>

Vester, B. (2009): *COMET model of community engagement in education: Local government as a champion for education the new Auckland.* COMET working paper 027/09

APPENDIX 2: Government vision statements

It is important to align community strategic priorities to government strategic planning. The table below summarises government's goals and key education sector statements.

<p><i>Government's vision for education</i></p> <p>Lifting the educational achievement of all New Zealand children</p> <p>Priority Outcome 1 Every child has the opportunity to participate in high-quality early childhood education.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 2 Every child achieves literacy and numeracy levels that enable their success.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 3 Every young person has the skills and qualifications to contribute to their and New Zealand's future.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 4 Relevant and efficient tertiary education provision that meets student and labour market needs.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 5 Māori enjoying education success as Māori.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 6 The Ministry is capable, efficient and responsive to achieve education priorities.</p>	
<p><i>Vision of the New Zealand Curriculum:</i></p> <p>Young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners</p>	<p><i>Nga Huarahi Arataki, the strategic plan for early childhood education</i></p> <p>Increase participation in quality ECE services; improve quality of ECE services; promote collaborative relationships</p>
<p><i>Government's vision for tertiary education</i></p> <p>Provide New Zealanders of all backgrounds with opportunities to gain world-class skills and knowledge</p> <p>Raise the skills and knowledge of the current and future workforce to meet labour market demand and social needs</p> <p>Produce high quality research to build on New Zealand's knowledge base, respond to the needs of the economy and address environmental and social challenges</p> <p>Enable Māori to enjoy education success as Māori</p>	
<p><i>Ka Hikitia</i></p> <p>Māori enjoying education success as Māori:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māori students working with others to find and follow successful learning and education pathways • Māori students' cultural and distinctive contributions successfully realised through education • Māori students successfully contributing to te ao Māori • Māori students successfully contributing to Aotearoa New Zealand and the world 	
<p><i>Pacific Education Plan</i></p> <p>building strong learning foundations</p> <p>lifting Pasifika literacy and numeracy</p> <p>increasing the number of Pasifika students achieving school-level qualifications</p>	

COMET’s vision is “Educated and Knowledgeable Aucklanders.” Our mission is to transform Auckland’s social and economic landscape through education. We do this through advocacy to inform and influence community, council and government policy around education and through building partnerships and projects in high need, low-decile communities. Our focus is on skills; and learning in families.

COMET is a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) of Auckland Council. It was established by Manukau City Council as a not-for-profit charitable trust in 1999 to address education issues in the city.

COMET’s work is supported by:



The views expressed in this submission are solely those of COMET