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**SUBMISSION on the Auckland Council draft  
Auckland Plan 2050**

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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 tēnei 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 anō 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.

- Kūkupa Tirikatene

## About COMET Auckland

[COMET Auckland - Te Hononga Akoranga](#) is an independent charitable trust and Auckland Council's CCO focused on education, skills and lifelong learning across Auckland. Our latest Statement of Intent is [here](#).

We bring together sector leaders to identify gaps and solutions to meet Auckland Plan goals for education, skills and lifelong learning. Our core budget from council is leveraged to attract government and philanthropic funding to trial solutions that lead to widespread change. Our current work includes:

[SouthSci participatory science programme](#) – Under MBIE's Curious Minds programme we introduce students and teachers to STEM by supporting them to develop and undertake community research projects that link with industry and research institutions.

[Talking Matters](#) early oral language campaign – With trials in Puketapapa, Tāmaki and Mangere-Otahuhu, and a network of more than 200 individuals and 70 organisations.

[Youth Employability Programme: Licence to Work](#) – Developed with the Employers and Manufacturers Association, our 'soft skills' work readiness programme is delivered by schools, PTEs, youth, welfare and employer organisations across Auckland and the North Island.

[Data snapshots](#) - For Auckland and each of the 21 local boards, the snapshots bring together the latest information on enrolments, staffing ratios, learning of te reo Māori and other languages, achievement and qualifications, and post-study employment and earnings.

[Mātauranga Māori](#) – We host the Tāmaki Makaurau Education Forum to identify pathways to success in education for Māori, and the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

Advocacy & collaboration – We advocate for education, skills and lifelong learning to council, government and other agencies through formal and informal [submissions](#) and collaborative forums. We convene the [Learning Auckland](#) leadership table, [Auckland Languages Strategy](#) Working Group and [Auckland STEM Alliance](#).

## Introduction

This submission has been assembled by COMET Auckland based on our own knowledge and experience, and ongoing, extensive discussions with education stakeholders.

COMET Auckland participated in the targeted feedback on two earlier drafts of the Plan. Some of our comments and suggestions have been included in the Plan that is now out for consultation.

However, we believe there are several places where the goals would be strengthened by **adding some specific measures to the monitoring framework**. Some are measures for Auckland Council. Others are measures to be used to interrogate and advocate to central government about its level and quality of funding and services for Aucklanders.

We also propose **an extra focus area for Transport and Access** - Focus Area 8: Move to free public transport for all students.

## Outcome: Belonging and participation

COMET Auckland strongly supports the goal of an inclusive Auckland and, in particular, focus areas 4, 5 and 6. We strongly support the emphasis on education, skills and lifelong learning as key investments to redress our city's disparities. COMET Auckland is a long-time campaigner for the benefits of harnessing diversity and multilingualism. With our partners in the Tāmaki Makaurau Education Forum and the Auckland Languages Strategy we are long-time campaigners for the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

To strengthen implementation we believe the Plan and monitoring framework would be strengthened by adding two measures:

- Measure 7: Use of te reo Māori on all city signage and council publications
- Measure 8: the % of Aucklanders who speak more than one language, over time.

## Outcome: Māori identity and wellbeing

COMET Auckland strongly supports the four directions and seven focus areas for advancing Māori wellbeing and, in particular, focus areas 1, 3 and 6.

We know and emphasise the importance of whānau to children's learning in our [Talking Matters NZ](#) early oral language campaign. Along with our Auckland Languages Strategy partners, We advocate for te reo Māori to be a core subject in all Auckland schools and to be on all signage across the city. We work to strengthen rangatahi leadership and their opportunities for learning as Māori through the Tāmaki Makaurau Education Forum's youth wānanga and our [Youth Employability Programme](#).

We believe that to advance Māori wellbeing requires a stronger and more specific focus in the Plan on advancing education and employment outcomes for rangatahi. We also believe that to support te reo Māori to flourish across the city requires concrete targets.

Consequently, we submit that the Plan and monitoring framework need to be strengthened with the inclusion of more specific measures, in particular:

### Contributing to **Measure 2: Māori in employment, education and training**

- Māori staying at school until age 17

*Our 2017 snapshot shows Māori have the lowest rate of all ethnic groups at 70%, which affects their leaving qualifications – the rate of NCEA Level 2 among Auckland school leavers jumps from 27.8% at age 16 to 89.8% at age 17.*

- Māori enrolled in tertiary education two years after leaving school and at what level
- Māori NEETs – not in education, employment or training
- Government funding for and provision of NEET programmes for Māori in Auckland

The purpose of the last three measures is to find out where the education and training system is failing Māori in Auckland, so council and its agencies like COMET Auckland can advocate alongside iwi and other organisations for effective central government responses.

We know the Māori NEET rate is several times that of other ethnic groups and this differential has been entrenched for many years so, clearly, what is being done isn't working.

### Contributing to **Measure 7: Te reo Māori across Tāmaki Makaurau**

- Te reo Māori on all signage across the city (*see above, extra Measure 7 in Belonging and Participation*)
- Te reo Māori taught in all Auckland schools
- Number and % of Māori students receiving te reo Māori at school

*Our latest Snapshot Auckland shows 69.4% of Māori students in Auckland received little or no te reo Māori in 2017.*

- Number and % of Māori students learning in te reo more than 50% of the time. *Last year 3,148 students learnt te reo Māori more than half the time, most in kura kaupapa or Māori immersion units.*
- Funding for te reo Māori in schools – as a curriculum subject, as a medium of learning, for less than 3 hours a week, and for teacher PD.

At present there is a lack of transparency and equity in funding and outcomes for te reo in Auckland schools. The shortage of qualified te reo teachers is well known. There needs to be a strategy and funding to build teacher capacity in te reo Māori for Auckland which is something council and its agencies, like COMET Auckland, can advocate for to government.

Meanwhile, there are options for government funding in Auckland schools which are working for other languages but which are not offered, so far, for te reo Māori.

Teaching of Chinese languages in schools has taken off since the introduction of the [Asian Language Learning in Schools](#) programme which funds (non-qualified) community experts to teach the subjects in schools.

There is no te reo Māori equivalent which disadvantages students at Auckland schools that lack qualified staff to teach te reo for the minimum three hours/week required to qualify for funding.

It also disadvantages groups like [Te Reo Tuatahi](#) which provides (non-qualified) community experts in te reo to schools on the North Shore, but does not qualify for funding because it is for less than three-hours/week.

It is important for council and its relevant agencies to be able to monitor progress against these very specific measures – as milestones towards Auckland Plan goals, as a gauge of central government performance, and for advocacy by council, its agencies, iwi and sector groups for funding and services for Auckland.

## **Outcome: Homes and places**

COMET Auckland strongly supports the directions and focus areas to ensure healthy, affordable homes with secure tenure for all Aucklanders, whether they own or rent their homes. In particular:

*Our 2017 Auckland data snapshot shows the lack of affordable housing combined with high cost of living is a key factor in Auckland's teacher shortage. Auckland's teacher shortage was already clear back in 2015, and getting worse compared with elsewhere in the country. Mid-career teachers are leaving Auckland to secure home ownership elsewhere.*

High rents, lack of secure tenure, overcrowding, and poor quality and damp housing all contribute to transience and illness among children which adversely affects their education.

We submit the Plan and monitoring framework need to be strengthened particularly around the impact of housing on multiple moves by families. Transience is a significant issue for

education outcomes and equity in Auckland. We do not believe 'homelessness' on its own will provide an adequate measure, so we propose an expanded measure:

#### **Measure 4: Homelessness and Transience**

*Our 2017 snapshot shows the number of transient students in Auckland has risen by 8.1% since 2012. Transient students are less than half as likely as their peers to achieve NCEA Level 2 or above. More than 1400 Auckland students transferred school twice or more during the school year in 2016.*

That's the most recent data available. With the worsening housing crisis we expect transience to rise further.

**We would also emphasise under Focus Areas 2 and 4, the importance of council and the Auckland Plan championing community-led financial literacy programmes and innovative homeownership models.**

COMET Auckland recently handed over our five-year financial literacy programme to community partners in Tāmaki and Manurewa. During the five-year trial, Te Awa Ora Trust in Randwick Park has helped dozens of families to clear debt and move into affordable rent-to-buy or shared equity homes at Waimahia Inlet, providing stability and transforming the children's health and performance at school. Waimahia is a joint venture between the New Zealand Housing Foundation and the Māori Trustee, and we recommend it as a model for social and affordable housing across Auckland.

## **Outcome: Transport and Access**

COMET Auckland supports transport improvements that reduce travel times and costs for teachers, students and families.

Transport is key to enabling students to get across town to special interest schools such as kura kaupapa and Pasifika bilingual units. Cost is also a significant barrier to university and tertiary education for young people in some areas, and contributes to the teacher shortage - especially for schools far from areas where teachers can afford to live.

To achieve the Auckland Plan's goals for education, training and employment, we believe there needs to be an extra transport focus area:

- **Focus Area 8: Move to free public transport for all students**

The cost of transport for students, especially tertiary students, is regularly raised by many of our stakeholders. We think it is time to seriously work towards free public transport as an investment in students' education and training, and in Auckland's economic prosperity.

## Outcome: Opportunity and Prosperity

COMET Auckland strongly supports investing in education, training and skills development for all Aucklanders as the pathway to opportunity and prosperity. We support the focus on advancing Māori employment, business and iwi organisations to be significant drivers of Auckland's economy. And we strongly support increasing educational achievement, lifelong learning and training, with a focus on those most in need.

We submit the Plan and the monitoring framework would be strengthened by adding measures to enable more detailed tracking of qualifications, skills and employment for young people.

### Contributing to **Measure 7: Educational achievement of young people**

- Students remaining in school until age 17 by ethnicity
- School leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above by age

*Our 2017 snapshot shows Māori and Pasifika fall below the Auckland-wide rate for staying at school until age 17, which is a significant predictor of achievement of NCEA Level 2 or above. Only the Asian ethnic group has more than 90% of students still at school at age 17. All other ethnic groups are under 90%, as is the all-Auckland rate.*

- School leavers by highest qualification
- School leavers enrolled in tertiary education two years after leaving school, by Level

*The 2017 Snapshot shows the % of school leavers with little or no formal attainment went down slightly to 3.7% between 2011-16, while the % of those with UE went up to 48.8%. However, the data is concerning for school leavers enrolled in tertiary education two years after leaving school. Enrolments in Degree courses Level 7+ edging over 40% in 2017 but at the same time, nearly 40% of the same cohorts were not enrolled at all, and enrolments were low and dropping for Level 1-3 and non-degree Level 4-7 courses.*

*This is concerning when combined with the Snapshot data for NEETs in Auckland.*

- Young NEETs – not in education, employment or training by ethnicity, and by age range (15-19, 20-25)

*NEET rates and raw numbers have been rising in the past three years. The Snapshot shows nearly 25,000 young Aucklanders aged 15-24 were not in education, employment or training in 2017. Nearly 20,000 of them were in the 19-24 age group.*

Taken together, these figures show the education and training system is failing to prepare significant numbers of young Aucklanders, particularly Māori and Pasifika, for employment.

Council and its agencies need to track this range of measures to be able to identify where the system is falling down, in order to direct our collective efforts and in order to advocate to central government for appropriate funding and services for Auckland.

In conclusion, COMET Auckland supports the draft Auckland Plan 2050 and believes its goals for education, training and lifelong learning and for te reo Māori can be strengthened in the ways we have proposed.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak to our submission at the appropriate time.

## **Contact for communications:**

Susan Warren, COMET Auckland Chief Executive

[www.cometauckland.org.nz](http://www.cometauckland.org.nz)

Email [susan.warren@cometauckland.org.nz](mailto:susan.warren@cometauckland.org.nz)

Ph 09 307 2101. Fax 09 379 5053; Mobile 021 757 048.

COMET Auckland, PO Box 3430, Shortland Street, Auckland 1140.