



Briefing Note: Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: Racism, Discrimination and Stigma Update

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins		
Date:	14 December 2018	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1170504 [REDACTED]
Drafter:	Donna Caddie	DDI:	s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
Key Contact:	Damian Edwards	DDI:	[REDACTED]
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to:

- update you on the "Children are free from racism discrimination and stigma" work-stream under the Child and Youth wellbeing Strategy.
- advise you of the key messages we heard about the extent racism, discrimination and stigma for New Zealand children and young people. We also heard that addressing this will require a long-term commitment to change within Government and, more broadly, throughout society.

Summary

- Two specific workshops and accompanying research has informed the direction of the "children are free from racism, discrimination and stigma" work-stream. Key messages we heard include:
 - Racism, discrimination and stigma are felt widely among some segments of NZ society.
 - To tackle discrimination we need to reveal and rethink bias and privilege at different scales including throughout society and within institutional settings
 - Addressing discrimination requires urgent action. Doing nothing poses a social, cultural and economic risk
 - Lasting change requires long term commitment, resources and effort to change systems and the hearts and minds of New Zealanders.
- We also heard that:
 - Planned system changes (mental health, justice and education reforms) and child-focussed interventions can help address entrenched discrimination and there needs to be deep and deliberate consideration of the issues from multiple perspectives. Strong and committed leadership is needed to affect the changes.

- Further work is needed to challenge the deeply held racial and discriminatory bias that exists within New Zealand and to reposition ourselves as one of acceptance and diversity.
- We will prepare further advice on the next steps for this workstream in March.

Proactive release

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

Agree / Disagree

Agree to forward this briefing to the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and the Minister for Children.

Agree / Disagree



Damian Edwards
Associate Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy

14/12/18



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

30/12/18

Context

1. “*Children are Free from Racism, Discrimination and Stigma*” is a priority focus area of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. Outcomes being sought are that:
 - a. All children and young people are respected and valued for who they are
 - b. No child or young person, or group of children and young people faces discrimination or stigma on the ground of ethnicity, disability or for any other reason.
2. The Ministries of Education and Justice are co-leading this work. The Prime Minister in her letter dated 31 May 2018 encouraged broad thinking about the types of discrimination and how they are transmitted. She also encouraged bold and ambitious thinking across the Strategy.
3. This briefing has been prepared jointly by the Ministries of Education and Justice. The Minister of Justice has received this information through his weekly report update.

We held two workshops to inform the “*Children are free from racism discrimination and stigma*” work-stream

4. On the advice of the science advisers we ran two workshops on 7 November in Wellington, and 21 November in Auckland [METIS 1155187 refers]. The purpose of the workshops was to help develop a better understanding of the scope, scale and nature of racism, discrimination and stigma (collectively referred to in this briefing as discrimination) experienced by children. We worked with other agencies and the Chief Science Advisors to develop a list of possible participants.
5. At the workshops, participants explored the root causes of discrimination from a range of perspectives, developed a shared vision of success, and identified specific interventions that would have the greatest and most enduring impact on children and youth in New Zealand.
6. The non-government participants who attended came from Māori, Pacific and many other cultural backgrounds including migrants and refugees, members of rainbow communities, people with “disabilities”, and youth. Roles included academics, youth advocates, frontline workers in NGOs, school principals, students and concerned parents.
7. Participants generously shared their lived experiences and personal research and were excited to hear that the Government wanted to address these issues. Participants were positive about the workshop process, with many saying that it was ‘very different to other Government consultation’ they had attended. Participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss these issues and appreciated the Ministries’ efforts to be inclusive and genuinely listen and learn from them.
8. Workshop participants acknowledged that tackling racism, discrimination and stigma had not been done before in a comprehensive or meaningful way in New Zealand and was urgently needed.

The input received at the workshops reiterates other engagement and research findings

9. The issues raised and the input received at the workshops reiterates messages heard by the Ministry through conversations held this year within the Kōrero Mātauranga conversations including the Education Summits, the Pacific education fono, the Māori education wānanga and the surveys. Similar points were raised in the Justice summits

and mental health inquiry. The input also reiterates the messages in the reports published earlier this year by the Office of the Children's Commissioner – Education Matters to Me.

10. The Child Wellbeing Unit from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has done an initial scan of feedback it has received through its broader public engagement activities. A very strong theme from children and young people was that they want to feel accepted and valued for who they are. Experiences of institutional racism or discrimination also came through strongly in feedback from both adults and children.
11. These discussions have created expectations and clarified that action on racism and discrimination is urgently needed to stop the harm it is causing to children and young people across New Zealand. More work is needed to identify the scope and scale of this work-stream and understand what new work is needed.
12. We have also begun to review international and New Zealand based studies and academic literature. Key themes that emerged from this review included:
 - a. Better understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and other historical contexts in society, and ensuring Māori as the indigenous culture is given first priority;
 - b. Prioritisation of teaching te reo, tikanga and the teaching of Treaty and local New Zealand history at school;
 - c. The need for increased engagement with a diverse range of children when considering policy / legislation changes that affect them;
 - d. The importance of reducing poverty and addressing society's attitudes towards class-based stigma;
 - e. The need for the health and education sector to work more closely with groups of children (especially vulnerable children) and their families; and
 - f. The importance of raising the consciousness of bias and creating awareness for ways to actively address it at the personal level.

Key findings from the workshops

We heard the impacts of racism, discrimination and stigma are significant

13. Children and young people in New Zealand experience societal racism, discrimination and stigma daily through social interactions, media and via structural bias. We heard and know from research this causes serious impacts on people and demands a lot from support systems. Discrimination causes high levels of distress, negative mental health and educational outcomes and poorer social and life outcomes. These emotional scars remain with the person into their adult years. Participants were clear this should not be accepted as normal.

"Recognise that racism, discrimination and stigma cause mental health issues"
14. Racism, discrimination and stigma are felt by individuals (both from others and also internalised beliefs and negative thinking), by peer groups and particular communities. People reported entrenched discrimination against groups of people sharing characteristics that weren't considered 'normal' such as race and ethnicity, gender diversity, sexual orientation, and those with disabilities, mental health challenges and learning needs.

15. Through people's lived experiences we heard that discrimination comes through social interactions (or lack of), unfair behaviours, lower expectations and reduced opportunities, racial profiling as well as structural bias for examples where services can only be accessed by those with particular cultural knowledge.

Participants considered that the lack of diverse voices in decision-making added to systemic discrimination.

Participants thought there was increasing economic and cultural segregation in society ("ethnoburbs") and this was reducing opportunities to value differences and seek alternative voices.

"People don't want to explore the topics of oppression and racism – white fragility"

16. Discrimination was also identified as systemic failures in adequate service delivery to particular groups. This included for example the education system not delivering for disadvantaged and those with disabilities or learning needs. Failure to address the bias in the justice system and health care systems, particularly for Māori was also raised. The media and workplaces were also discussed as being discriminatory environments that disadvantages people by perpetuating an outdated and narrow view of 'normal'.

17. Participants recognised, as a root cause, the dominance of Pākehā culture (privilege) including in systems and structures and as the definer of New Zealand norms and values. This was discussed as a barrier requiring dialogue and review. Better implementation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi was seen as key to 'sharing or extending privilege' and challenging bias. The role of media was also discussed as both a cause of perpetuating discrimination and a key for inspiring awareness raising and change towards normalising diversity and acceptance.

The vision

Participants described New Zealand as a place of belonging where diversity flourished and identity can be explored, differences embraced

18. Both workshops undertook to develop a vision for what New Zealand would look like if it was free of racism, discrimination and stigma. The conversations are synthesised in Annex 1 – A vision and success factors for a New Zealand free from racism, discrimination and stigma.

19. The shared themes from the visioning exercises included a need for the environments in which children and young people grow to be safe emotional spaces where they can be curious, explore, develop and express their identity without fear.

"Comfortable and safe exploring who they are"

20. Inclusion and acceptance of difference was needed at different levels:

- Individuals in a family environment* (we heard that acceptance was more challenging for LGBTQIA+ people in particular);
- In *peer groups* which were seen as critical for developing deeper connections with a diverse group of people;
- In community and school environments* with equitable access to opportunity so people can reach their full potential and all children can access basic necessities;
- In New Zealand's society* – institutional systems, structures and practices need to be improved to ensure a country where diversity is celebrated and appreciated and welcomed.

Barriers to the vision

21. The attendees identified a number of barriers to the vision. These included the attitudes and biases held by people and an unwillingness to challenge thinking. People thought this came from a lack of understanding of the value of different people and lack of diversity of relationships. Fear of difference and a bullying culture were seen as standing in the way of a society of belonging and acceptance.
22. A further barrier was people's difficulty in calling out discrimination as it was felt that saying something put them in an unsafe or antagonistic position. Participants questioned why New Zealand had allowed such discrimination to become embedded, seen as normal and accepted, despite the negative impacts on all of us.
23. A lack of diversity of role models, people in media or people in positions of power was seen as a barrier to belonging and expression of diverse views. It was considered that more visible differences would help to challenge the narrow view of "normal" and be empowering to a greater range of people as they could see their identity reflected in the environment around them.
24. The prevalence of school zoning and decile labelling of schools was frequently raised as a driver of increasing cultural and economic segregation. This has also been raised through education-specific conversations held this year.

*"Got to be so
brave to call it ...
You protect
yourself and say
nothing"*

*"Only path of
success is rugby or
rapping for a kid
from South
Auckland"*

*"Schools shouldn't
determine 'class' e.g.
decile and zones"*

Key themes for action from the evidence and the workshops

25. Participants discussed how to address discrimination in ways that would create the highest impact for children and young people. Key themes included:
- Upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in more meaningful ways;
 - Addressing institutional racism and discrimination;
 - Widespread teaching and use of te reo and tikanga;
 - A conversation on national values and shared identity;
 - Building in more opportunities for children's voice and increasing the visibility of diversity in media, role models and decision-making;
 - Addressing poverty and other basic needs for children;
 - More education for diversity such as by building cultural competence and teaching acceptance. A link was made to Te Kotahitanga;
 - Addressing social attitudes to be more accepting and welcoming of diversity.

Consider and unpick the bias in government and institutional systems

26. Upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in more meaningful ways across Government policies, services and systems was a key theme of both workshops. In workshop one, participants raised using the Treaty as "New Zealand's founding human rights document". This was tested at workshop two and while attendees agreed with the importance of the Treaty, it was also seen as problematic to consider it a "human rights" document. A "modern constitution" was raised as an alternative to using the Treaty as a platform for discussions, due to the changing nature of our society and concerns about the divisive and negative Treaty associations.
27. Participants raised many actions relating to institutional discrimination where systems and ways of accessing the systems assumed cultural knowledge or had embedded bias. This included health care systems which assumed knowledge of how to access and navigate different services, rather than having information available about someone's

rights. Similarly, navigating the education system for success was seen to be driven and determined by Pākehā culture and did not have adequate room for other cultures to define their own success. There are opportunities to deliberately consider this when reviewing systems such as education, justice, welfare and mental health. Some pockets of positive change were raised and can be further investigated.

28. Ensuring everyone had enough resources to participate in society, addressing child poverty and ensuring access to healthcare (particularly mental health care) was raised in the context of discrimination. Work on these issues are other priorities in the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy which reiterates the importance of this work, and embedding a deliberate focus of reducing discrimination in their policy design and development.

Change the hearts and minds of New Zealanders

29. Participants raised the need for a 'values reset'. A widespread national conversation on our shared values and identity was strongly supported. One idea was that these conversations could inform a document such as a modern 'constitution' which could address the Crown obligations to Māori, children and the human rights of all New Zealanders.
30. A number of other potential solutions were raised to improve understanding, increase the range of voices and diversity of representation. These included better education about the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and reviewing how, and the perspectives from which, local and New Zealand history is taught. Also raised was a need to celebrate culturally diverse heroes and role models.
31. Some participants also thought there was a need to reframe leadership, particularly to ensure diversity and representation of communities and enable Māori self-determination (mana motuhake). Less individualistic, 'merit' based leaders and more opportunities for whānau and rangatahi / children's voice in matters that affect them were also raised as an opportunity that would help create a more accepting country.

"Action the right of Māori to mana motuhake"

Action to address the root causes of discrimination is expected

32. It is clear from the workshops, other engagement and research that solving discrimination for children and young people is urgently required. Expectations for change have been created through a number of engagement forums across government. If nothing, or an insufficient level of consideration is given to the root causes of racism, discrimination and stigma, these issues are likely to worsen.
33. Unless all children, from multiple cultures, and those with various levels of ability and expressions of identity are able to meet their full potential, we create unsustainable levels of harm, and undermine educational success and full citizen participation. The changing demographics of New Zealand requires us to find ways to meaningfully welcome diversity and difference. This is critical to the social and economic success of New Zealand.

Next steps

34. We will continue to work across the Ministries of Education and Justice to synthesise the input from the workshops and research and consider how best to navigate the complexities and different levels of the problem and change needed.

35. Future planning will include consideration of the other projects that we can leverage for change. This will include, for example, the refresh of Te Kotahitanga and the Teaching Council's "Give Nothing to Racism" project as well as other system reviews.
36. We will provide a fuller briefing to you in March in which will define the problem in more detail, outline the scope and general direction of travel and some potential next steps for this work-stream. It is likely that we will continue to develop relationships with the workshop participants to test our ideas.

Annex 1: A vision and success factors for a New Zealand free from racism, discrimination and stigma

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Our children and young people feel safe to explore and express their identity and feel comfortable in their own skin

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is upheld and power and privilege is shared

New Zealand is a place of belonging where differences are embraced as our strength

Participants from workshops held in Wellington and Auckland in November 2018 shared their experiences that showed racism, discrimination and stigma is occurring throughout society. They painted a picture of what success would look like, which we have mapped at different levels from an individual through to New Zealand society. These messages reiterate the messages in other engagement and research undertaken.

Success for individuals and whānau means:

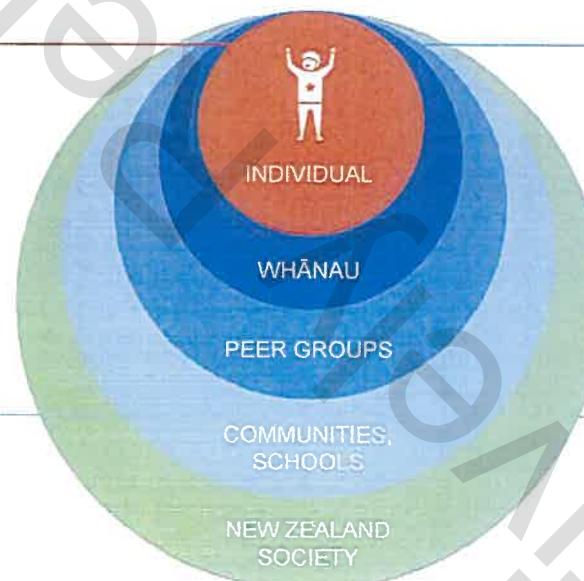
Everyone can explore and understand their own identity without fear – be comfortable in their own skin
Families/ whānau are supported to understand and welcome diversity and fluidity
Strong families who are proud of who they are and strong in language, identity and culture
Children's voices are heard in matters that affect them
All children and whānau speak te reo and know tikanga
No poverty – children have a living wage/universal payment. Fewer mental health issues
People can identify and feel safe calling out racist or unfair behaviour

Success for peer groups means:

Peer groups are characterised by diversity, school settings are inclusive
Equal expectations for all with many chances to succeed and fulfil potential
Children and young people have opportunities to express their views and participate in society (and they are listened to!)
The education system meets all kids' individual needs
Culturally sustaining workplaces and schools
Discrimination is not tolerated by peers. People feel safe calling out discrimination

Success for COMMUNITIES and SCHOOLS means:

Equity of access to social systems, support and educational opportunities
Acceptance of diversity identity fluidity in different social contexts such as peer groups, neighbourhoods and the workforce
Equally high expectation for all kids to achieve to their full potential
All schools offer te reo, teach Te Tiriti, New Zealand history (e.g. dawn raids, land wars), and celebrate Māori heroes as part of the curriculum
Everyone's voices are valued equally and all forms of knowledge are valued.
Cultural and economic diversity in communities.
Communities and media reinforce ideals of acceptance and tolerance.
Diversity is visible and there is a range of identities represented.



Success for New Zealand society means:

New Zealand is a fair, safe and welcoming country. Visitors feel our values of respect, mana and manaakitanga
Positive role models come from a range of cultures and circumstances
New Zealand's world view reflects the knowledge, languages and understanding of all people. There is no racial profiling or hierarchy
New Zealand's structures and systems require voice, participation and adequate representation from a range of identities.
Te Tiriti is meaningfully upheld in structures and systems. Te reo and tikanga informs cultural belonging and New Zealand's identity and are featured in international interactions
Success is multifaceted and collective, not just determined by Pākehā values (e.g. economic, individual merit based or capitalist)
New Zealand is a place of belonging that welcomes all forms of identity and self expression

Four key messages we heard:

1. Racism, discrimination and stigma are widely felt and transmitted.

2. To tackle discrimination we need to reveal and rethink bias and privilege at different scales.

3. Addressing discrimination is urgently needed. Doing nothing is a social, cultural and economic risk.

4. Lasting change requires long term commitment, resources and effort to change systems and the hearts and minds of New Zealanders.