

COMET



WORKING TOGETHER FOR EDUCATION

Portfolios for Education and Skills

A submission to the Auckland Transition Agency on the structures for Auckland's CCOs.

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SUMMARY

This is a submission that identifies a future path for Auckland Council engagement in education and skills. Education is a key infrastructure for Auckland's growth, and requires a carefully-crafted structural and operational response within the new governance of Auckland. Where and how education and skills will be addressed must take into account the complexity and importance of this portfolio of work to economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing.

COMET will transfer as a CCO with responsibility for education into the Auckland Council. COMET is already established with a Mission for "transforming Auckland's economic and social landscape through education", and a history of successful innovative action in this area. We submit that COMET continue to undertake responsibility for leading and shaping action that addresses education and skills as tools for both economic development and social wellbeing.

Connections will be critical to effective action. We submit that COMET should have reporting responsibility to both community development and economic development strategy planners, to integrate drive towards outcomes.

We submit that Auckland Council should have a single-desk approach to engagement with central government education agencies on education and skills.

The proposal to also locate a portfolio for education and skills *within* the Economic Development, Tourism and Events CCO has the potential to confuse accountabilities for outcomes. The portfolio of each CCO needs definition. We submit projects that build school-business relationships go to COMET, which already works in this space.

We agree that a close relationship with the EDTE CCO will be important. This can be given effect through operational processes rather than structural change to the proposals outlined in the Discussion Paper.

Education: a tool for social and economic wellbeing

Change in Auckland's economic and social wellbeing relies on having a skilled population that embraces all communities

The new governance structure of Auckland provides an opportunity to more effectively act to improve overall population skill levels.

We do not repeat here the evidence of poor levels of skill in distinct parts of Auckland¹, in the South and West in particular. How Auckland will adjust to a complex geography of poverty and growth will be critical to New Zealand's future.

The economic, social, fiscal and institutional domains of contemporary urban Auckland are inter-related. Change in one domain will influence change in the others.

The most significant levers for change are held by central government. However, no one lever is going to be able to achieve the levels of change in skills that Auckland's economic development agenda will require. This is because of the complex dynamics that impact on educational achievement and skills growth.

An intermediary is needed to connect to central government resources in the social domain, as well as be connected to the strategic decisions of the Auckland region for economic development.

The entity holding the portfolio for education and skills will be required to operate within and between domains, in order to most effectively deliver change in the core indicators² that point to an educated population with skills that support economic growth.

The portfolio for education and skills needs to rest where it can effectively be connected to the community development work of the Council and the Social Issues Forum, as well as the Economic Development, Tourism and Events CCO. It must also be connected to the civic leadership of Local Boards, the Maori Board, and the Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel.

¹ In particular, the findings of the International ALLS Survey on adult literacy and numeracy skills, reported by the Ministry of Education

² The national indicators for social wellbeing, including those for education and skills, are gathered annually in the Social Report, prepared by the Ministry of Social Development. Other indicators also exist in international surveys such as the Adult Literacy and Learning Survey (ALLS) which benchmarks population literacy and numeracy levels.

The Education CCO.

COMET will transfer as a Trust CCO with responsibility for education into the Auckland Council.

It is logical that COMET will transfer into the Auckland Council as a Trust CCO with responsibility for education and skills.

COMET, the only existing Education CCO in New Zealand, operates from an innovative model for the local government – education interface³. The COMET model has been developed from research and analysis of initiatives all around New Zealand⁴ and in other international jurisdictions.

Our on-the-ground experience is that as a CCO we have been able to offer access to educational leadership and governance expertise; and have built a capacity for focused action based on evidence and sector commitment.

As a Charitable Trust, COMET is able to access philanthropic funding. The Trust shapes public-private partnerships through key projects, and has leveraged its funding from the Council to obtain central government commitment to undertake innovative pilot work across a number of action areas: among them, school-business relationships; family learning; and early childhood education.

We submit that COMET continue to undertake responsibility for leading and shaping action that addresses education and skills as tools for both economic development and social wellbeing.

³ Vester, B. (2009). *COMET model of community engagement in Education: Local government as a champion for learning*. COMET. Paper 027/09.

⁴ Bernardine Vester, 2007: 'Education and local government working together: a community governance approach', *Policy Quarterly*, Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington. <http://ips.ac.nz/publications/publications/show/223>

Connecting economic development and community development arms of the Council.

For effective change in education and skills, there must be a connection between the economic development and community development arms of the Council.

There appear to be distinct management and reporting lines for the Economic Development and Community Development spheres of the Council.



It would be unrealistic to expect the Economic Development, Tourism and Events CCO to develop capacity and capability to engage with the Social Issues Forum. Nevertheless, economic development activities will have a social development impact; and vice versa.

It will be important that the EDTE CCO and the Education CCO engage with each other. Some of the possibilities are more practical than others:

- Governance level: cross-membership
- Regular CEO / Senior Management engagement of the EDTE CCO with the Education CCO CEO
- Invitation to representation on key “Advisory Groups”, particularly where the Advisory Groups have input into the Statement of Intent
- Co-location / selected co-location
- Council-facilitated forums (strategic and/or project focused)

We submit that COMET should have reporting responsibility to both community development and economic development strategy planners, to integrate drive towards outcomes.

The Wellington – Auckland relationship

To influence skills development in Auckland, the new Auckland Council must address the gap between Wellington decision-making and Auckland's multi-ethnic and plural education context.

The restructuring of governance in Auckland provides an opportunity for taking the big picture view of education provision in Auckland. The education infrastructure – i.e. network of services – is an important element in urban planning, economic and social wellbeing. There needs to be a deliberate approach to connecting the education infrastructure to the economic and social development of Auckland.

Education is a devolved sector. While the Ministry of Education makes significant *capital investments* (in schools and early childhood education centres, as well as tertiary institutions) in Auckland, the delivery of services is governed by a complex framework of providers that have high levels of self-determination.

Local government analysts at Commonwealth level have argued that organisations *outside* institutional local government and central government are often more able to exert leadership [for participatory governance and new ways of working]⁵ than the institutions themselves.

The complex interweaving of stakeholder interests must be co-ordinated. The CCO structure has already been proven robust in this role. However, the process is as important as the structure. New capacities and connections are required in Auckland to deliver productivity gains and skills growth.

We submit that a single desk approach to engagement between the Ministry of Education and other education agencies and the Auckland Council is more likely to create an effective working relationship between Wellington and Auckland on education-related matters.

⁵ Chris Aulich, 2009. 'From Citizen Participation to Participatory Governance in Australian Local Government'. *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, Issue 2.

Defining the Portfolio for Education and Skills

The Council's role in education is about more than economic growth. Education is also a community development tool.

There is an argument to be made about aligning the strategic 'business' growth of education as an export earner, international relationship driver, and centre of urban precincts with associated agglomeration benefits to the economic development portfolio. There is no doubt that this should be the responsibility of the EDTE CCO.

The "Education and Skills portfolio" within the proposed EDTE CCO, therefore, could encompass one or more of the activities in the following table:

Export Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing international education in Auckland• Liaison with Education New Zealand
Business Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting training for enterprise and entrepreneurship for businesses
Education as Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning Quarter development (Auckland City Council)• South Pacific Education Hub in Manukau

However, the Council does require a sharper interface with the skills supply side: that is, the sector delivering skills / productivity outcomes – schools and early childhood centres, related government agencies and private training establishments. In our view, the portfolio for Education and Skills also contains the following:

School-Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principal For A Day• Education 4 Enterprise and related initiatives• Young Enterprise Scheme
Liaison with central government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brokerage with urban planning• New schools• New early childhood centres• Social Issues Forum interface
Skills and youth unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth transitions – co-ordination of city responses / partnership with Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs.• 'Skills Council' concept including supply and demand matching and leadership engagement between business and skills development providers• Co-ordination of collaborative city skills campaign
Family and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative initiatives with schools / early childhood centres [to create innovative adult pathways into the labour market / enhance schooling outcomes / etc]• Community engagement in learning

The proposal in the Discussion Document to also locate a portfolio for education and skills within the Economic Development, Tourism and Events CCO has the potential to confuse accountabilities for outcomes. The portfolio of each CCO needs definition. We submit that the school-business work go to COMET, which already has identified this portfolio in its Statement of Intent. Existing contractual obligations may be transferred undisturbed.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO - SUMMARY

Export Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> marketing international education in Auckland liaison with Education New Zealand 	to Economic Development CCO
Business Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting training for enterprise and entrepreneurship for businesses 	to Economic Development CCO
Education as Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. Learning Quarter development (Auckland City) e.g. South Pacific Education Hub (Manukau) 	To Economic Development CCO
School-Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal For A Day Education 4 Enterprise projects and related programmes Young Enterprise Scheme 	to Education CCO
Liaison with central government agencies (e.g. Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brokerage with urban planning New schools New early childhood centres Social Issues Forum interface 	to Education CCO
Skills & youth unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth transitions – co-ordination of city responses 	to Education CCO
Skills & labour markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordination of city / local board responses 'Skills Council' concept Lead agency for collaborative projects 	to Education CCO
Co-ordination of collaborative city skills campaign	Potential - Related to One Plan for Auckland	to Education CCO
Family and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative initiatives with schools / early childhood centres 	to Education CCO

Statement of Intent

Given the importance of education and skills to economic development, there must be alignment between the EDTE CCO Statement of Intent and the Education CCO Statement of Intent.

The Statement of Intent of the EDTE CCO should include the following elements:

- A commitment to the development of a strong working relationship with the Education CCO, including
 - participation of a relevant manager on an Education CCO Advisory Group
 - participation of the Education CEO on a relevant Management or Advisory Group of EDTE CCO.
 - Sharing of labour market information
 - Engagement in joint project delivery, where appropriate.