

28 March 2024

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## SUBMISSION TO HEALTH COMMITTEE ON THE PAE ORA (HEALTHY FUTURES) (IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES) AMENDMENT BILL

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission on the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) (Improving Mental Health Outcomes) Amendment Bill (**the Bill**).

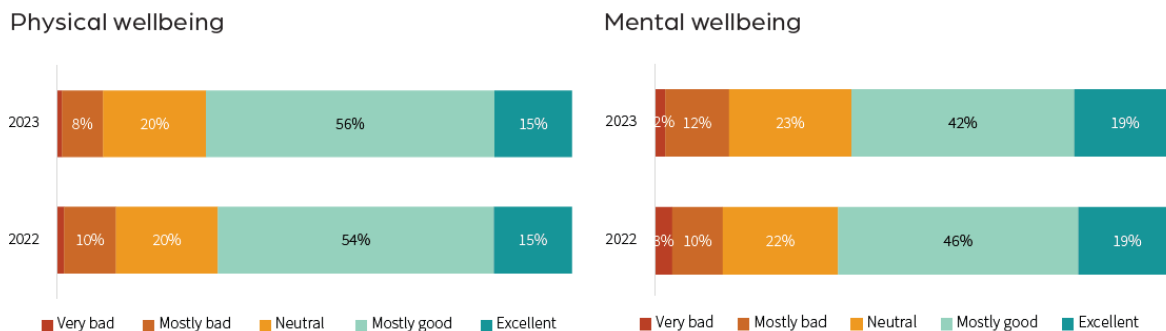
In principle, the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC, Council**) is supportive of the Bill, and makes the following points:

- The addition of mental health and addiction outcomes proposed in the Bill is welcomed, but QLDC recommends that broader community wellbeing outcomes are included, as this is integral to overall healthy communities.
- QLDC supports the requirement in the Bill for a national Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This is vital for improving and delivering a consistent model of service and support across Aotearoa New Zealand, including ensuring a strong focus on the regions and rural areas.
- QLDC recommends that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy should ensure alignment and continued investment with community led approaches to wellbeing.

### The Queenstown Lakes District (QLD) Context

As with many parts of Aotearoa New Zealand, communities in the QLD continue to experience pressures on mental health and wellbeing, and access to support and services. QLDC’s recently released annual Quality of Life Survey results<sup>1</sup> illustrate that a concerning proportion of residents rate their mental wellbeing as being ‘mostly bad’ or ‘very bad’ (see **Figure 1** below).

Residents generally display high levels of mental and physical health, with 71% rating their physical health and 61% rating their mental health as ‘good or better’. However, ratings of mental health have fallen slightly from last year’s survey.



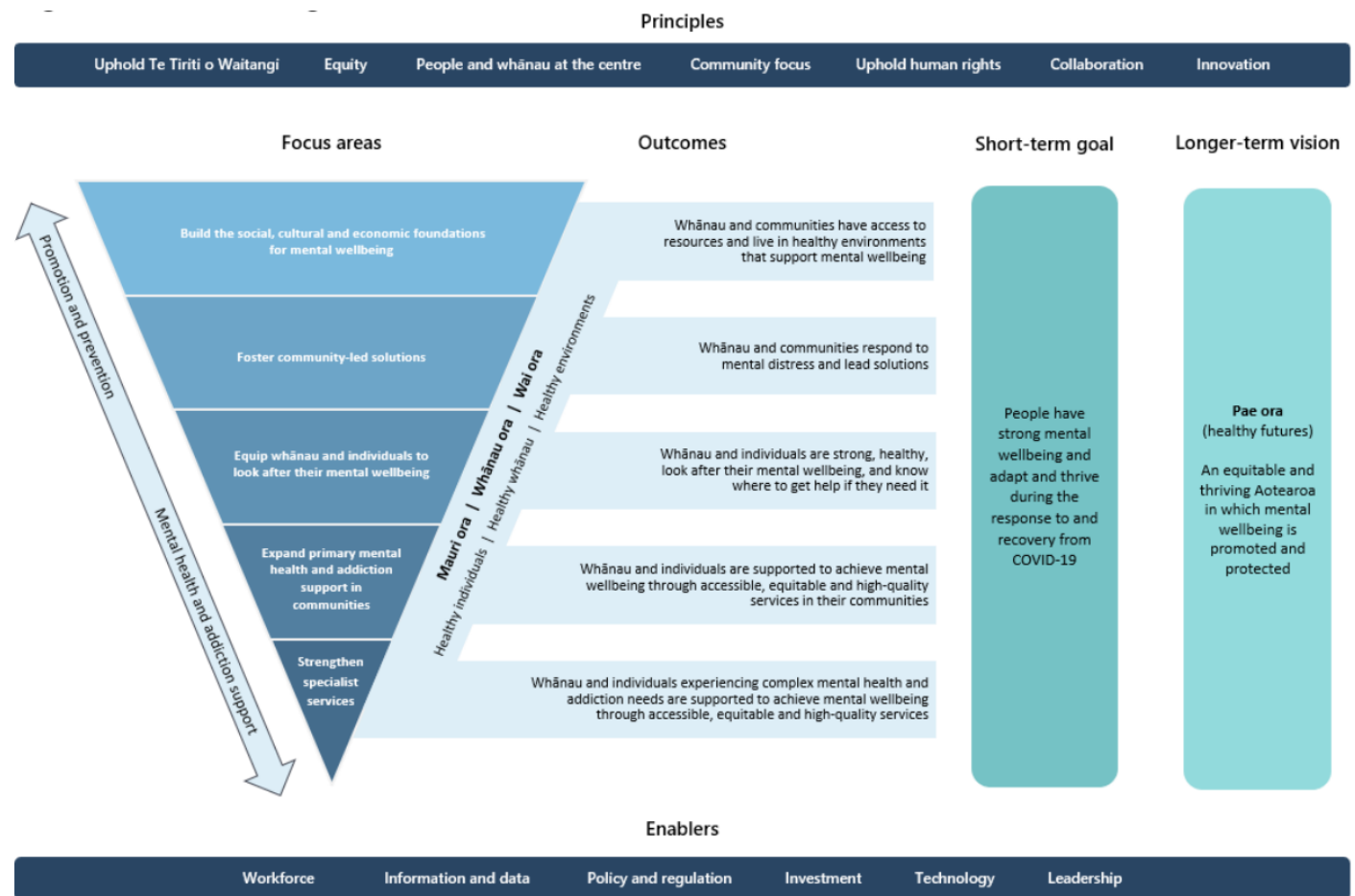
**Figure 1** – 2023 QLDC Quality of Life survey results for physical and mental wellbeing.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/03xmzt00/qldc-quality-of-life-2023-report.pdf>

## The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy needs to acknowledge the importance of community led initiatives

QLDC strongly recommends that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy aligns and provides for continued investment with the 2023 New Zealand Health Strategy<sup>2</sup> and Kia Kaha, Kia Māia, Kia Ora Aotearoa: COVID-19 Psychosocial and Mental Wellbeing Plan (Kia Kaha Plan) (Figure 2)<sup>3</sup>.

While we are now through the COVID-19 pandemic, key references and investment into community wellbeing initiatives in the Kia Kaha Plan continue to be relevant and should be included in the proposed Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This will ensure preventative community-led solutions are provided for alongside clinical support, in order to achieve long-term improvement of mental health and addiction outcomes, as well as wider community wellbeing outcomes. This includes building the social, cultural and economic foundations for mental wellbeing, and equipping whānau, individuals and communities to look after their own mental wellbeing and know where to get help if they need it.



**Figure 2 – Mental wellbeing framework - Kia Kaha, Kia Māia, Kia Ora Aotearoa: COVID-19 Psychosocial and Mental Wellbeing Plan**

The work of Te Hau Toka Southern Lakes Wellbeing Group (**Te Hau Toka**) since 2021 provides an example of how investment in community-led wellbeing initiatives and targeted education programmes supports improved

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/new-zealand-health-strategy-oct23.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/kia-kaha-kia-maia-kia-ora-aotearoa-covid-19-psychosocial-mental-wellbeing-plan-21dec2020-v2.pdf>

community connection, resilience and overall wellbeing. Te Hau Toka is a community-led initiative with regional support (iwi, Mayors, Health, providers, community), delivering evidenced-based mental health and wellbeing initiatives by the community, with the community. Funding provided by Central Government has allowed Te Hau Toka to deliver a wide range of successful initiatives across the district<sup>4</sup>.

Key successes delivered by Te Hau Toka include:

- Improved promotion, prevention and early intervention with an equity lens.
- Facilitating a strong, united community voice with initiatives tailored to suit local needs.
- Mental health resources collated and centralised to connect people more easily to support.
- Local capacity built through training programmes like Mental Health 101.
- Connecting Communities micro-funding model.
- Youth Mental Health First Aid programme – an internationally acclaimed, Aotearoa New Zealand first.
- Larger-scale partnerships with various organisations to amplify their initiatives.
- Navigators, community connections, to help people find support.
- Regular messaging and communications to community.

QLDC does not wish to be heard at any hearings that result from this consultation process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Day', written in a cursive style.

Marie Day

**Community Partnerships Manager**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.southernhealth.nz/living-well/tehautoka/initiatives>