



**PSA submission on the  
proposed Auckland Council  
Long-Term Plan**

March 2024



PSA 

Local Government

Kāwanatanga-ā-Rohe

## PSA submission on Auckland Council Long Term Plan 2024-34

### *About the PSA*

The New Zealand Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi (the PSA) is the largest trade union in New Zealand with over 92,000 members, including over 10,000 working in local government.

For 110 years people have joined the PSA to negotiate their terms of employment collectively, to have a voice within their workplace, and to have an independent public voice on the quality of public and community services and how they're delivered.

Local democracy is a cornerstone for the PSA: vibrant communities are underpinned by strong democratic institutions that support and maximise citizen participation in local decisions. As the union for public and community services, we have a strong interest in ensuring that local government has strong public and community services that are resourced and supported to deliver for communities.

### **The PSA in Auckland**

The PSA represents approximately 26,000 members who live and work in Auckland, approximately 4000 of whom work for Auckland Council and its agencies.

All these members have a strong interest, as residents of Auckland, in the Plan and its aspirations and intentions. Members employed by Auckland Council and its agencies have an additional interest in how the Plan will affect their jobs, working conditions, and the important work they do for the benefit of their community.

### *About this submission*

This submission has been prepared by local PSA delegates who work in Auckland Council

## Overall comments on the draft plan

*“There are no circumstances in which the Auckland Council Governing Body would ever agree to sell the port land or enter into a lease agreement that would lock it into used-car and container port operations for decades – and it is well known I am utterly opposed as Mayor.”<sup>1</sup>*

- Mayor Wayne Brown, 2022

The PSA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion about Auckland Council's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 ("the Plan") in line with our partnership agreement between the Council and the PSA.<sup>2</sup>

Given the spread and nature of PSA's membership described above, we are in a unique position from which to comment and contribute as we seek to maintain, strengthen, and develop our constructive relationship with Auckland Council ("the Council"). In addition to being employees, our members and their whanau are also: residents, ratepayers, politically active citizens, and service users within Tāmaki Makaurau. Hence this submission is developed using these perspectives.

Our submission is guided by the following Principles:

- The significant cost of living increases now and into the foreseeable future are causing our members and employees of the Council significant financial strain which is having adverse impacts on their quality of life and well-being.
- The Local Government Act 2002 makes it clear that local authorities have wide-ranging responsibilities to pursue the four wellbeings – social, economic, cultural, and environmental – for the benefit of their communities.
- Retaining employees, their institutional knowledge and organisational loyalty is vital to ensure that local government organisation can meet their responsibilities and continue to provide high levels of service to our communities.
- Local government provides essential services to diverse groups throughout our communities. Within Aotearoa / New Zealand, no local government can match the scope, scale or importance of the services provided by Auckland Council and its CCO.
- The reality of climate change is no longer deniable – it is already here! The PSA is committed to a just transition that requires climate mitigation and climate adaptation measures to be fair and equitable to affected employees and their communities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2022/10/mayor-says-no-to-long-term-port-operator-lease/>

<sup>2</sup> The Auckland Council Public Service Association Pledge (March 2018)

- Strong vibrant local government is essential to a healthy and well-functioning civil society.

The PSA’s overall position as to the proposed Plan is that we do not believe any reduction in the services and activities is possible without fundamentally undermining the Council's ability to achieve the four well-being outcomes that it is statutorily mandated to provide. PSA acknowledges the Council's desire to manage costs for ratepayers and deliver / manage services more effectively - our members are ratepayers and Aucklanders too. But this should never come at the expense of diminished working life for working people and the PSA will always strongly oppose any proposed cuts to public services and activities that significantly impact our members and kaimahi across the region.

It is also our view that the Council will financially and structurally compromise our city by allowing the privatisation of locally and nationally strategic assets and services such as the Auckland Airport International Airport shares and the Ports of Auckland operations. (PSA’s note that the latter is being a proposed lease arrangement for over three decades under the Plan – something we note in our introductory quote that the Mayor is quite keen to avoid.) We want to make plain to both the elected officials and the rest of Auckland, that what is proposed in the Plan as to the AIAL shares and Ports operations is an ideologically driven and unjustified selling off of critical transport services that will hurt working people and sets Auckland up for a decade of austerity once the initial cash-injection is quickly and inevitably exhausted.

During the development of our submission, several questions were raised over key aspects of the proposed Plan that should be answered and responded to publicly by the Council so that PSA and the wider public can make more informed decisions as to what this Plan entails (or does not entail) – these are located under our respective responses for Q1 and Q4.

Our feedback to the substantive question is as follows:

### Summary of our responses to the consultation questions

<a href="#">Question 1</a>	
A	<b>Other</b>
B	<b>Do More</b> for all seven (7) services and activities
<a href="#">Question 2</a>	<b>Support most</b> of the proposal
<a href="#">Question 3</a>	<b>Other</b> – oppose operational change
<a href="#">Question 4</a>	
A	<b>Don’t proceed</b> with establishing the Auckland Future Fund and transferring AIAL shareholding

B	<b>Continue council group operation of the port</b> (though Port of Auckland Limited)
C	<b>Continue</b> to use it to fund council services
<a href="#">Question 5</a>	
A	<b>No change</b> – leave Captain Cook and Marsden wharves to be managed as part of the port operations
B	<b>Keep</b> Bledisloe Terminal as a Port of Auckland <b>operational area</b>
<a href="#">Question 6</a>	<b>Support</b> all proposed changes to business, targeted rates, fees and charges
<a href="#">Any other feedback</a>	<p><b>The PSA provides feedback on other matters:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>An Auckland ‘Just Transition Forum’ and kaimahi engagement on climate</i></li> <li>• <i>Living Wage accreditation</i></li> <li>• <i>Pay equity</i></li> <li>• <i>Workload</i></li> <li>• <i>Exemplar employment relations</i></li> <li>• <i>Responsible procurement</i></li> <li>• <i>The Long-Term Plan / Annual Budget process</i></li> </ul>

## Q1 - Overall Direction

For this question, PSA submits **Other** as our response covers elements of the Do More option but goes further than what has been proposed.

The PSA accepts and acknowledges the limitations on funding and revenue generation that local governments, like Auckland Council, have in New Zealand and we support the Plan's call for a fundamentally different relationship with central government. Until this is achieved, sustainable solutions to financial budgetary pressures will forever elude the Council and every year will result in a continual arm-wrestle with the public and regional stakeholders via the Annual Budget process for which services and assets are to be respectively reduced or sold off despite Auckland's rapidly growing population and the corresponding need and investment in large scale new infrastructure.

The PSA would have liked to have seen the Council's 'gameplan' more clearly when it comes to progressing this "fundamentally different relationship with central government" as this would clearly communicate to the public what the financial and funding barriers are and how the Council would envision these are overcome and what it is prepared to do to achieve it. We applaud the Council's desire for a sharing and return arrangement of GST with local government

collected on rates and new properties collected with the region, but it should also seriously consider adopting and campaigning on some of the recommendations on future funding made in the Productivity Commission's 2019 report into local government funding and financing in particular<sup>3</sup>:

- R7.4 – Government giving councils powers to levy some form of value capture using targeted rates;
- R7.5 – Government expands the usage of Special Purpose Vehicles to finance investment in growth infrastructure to accommodate a rapidly growing population including the placement of debt-servicing obligations on infrastructure beneficiaries.
- R7.12 – Council assessing rates for business properties in relation to the costs of the council services that directly benefit those properties.
- R7.14 – The Government pays development contributions on all projects it undertakes in the Auckland region in line with the Council's existing contribution policy.
- R7.15 – Government removing the Crown rating exemption to allow for pay for services Council provides to Crown properties.
- R7.16 - Funding Council to cover the cost of damage caused to local roads by usage of heavy vehicles, such as ringfencing funding for local authorities out from Road User Charge.
- R7.19 – Government providing funding to Auckland Council for critical infrastructure such as roading or drinking water.

Council has no choice but to 'do more' in response to our rapidly growing population – which is expected to grow by an additional 200,000 people by 2034.<sup>4</sup> This is in addition to the changing demographics of our existing population, which is increasingly ageing and, in both instances, would require greater service and activity delivery by local government in particular our Council-owned libraries, pools, parks and community events as well as fast, frequent and reliance public transport.

Any option that does not provide for far greater investment than what is proposed in our existing portfolio of assets and services as well as properly provides for large-scale new infrastructure investment to service a rapidly growing and changing population is effectively 'kicking the can down the road' and places the city at significant risk of structural decay and economic gridlock in the long-term.

It is unclear why the Council has proposed setting its debt-to-revenue target at 270% reducing it to 250% by 2034 particularly given there has been no indication that its credit rating is or would be affected if it were to borrow more. The 270/250% cap is a self-imposed one and the Council can, as an alternative to higher rates increase, propose increased borrowing within the headroom up to the Local Government's Funding Agency's 285% limit for further capital

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<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Productivity Commission, Final Report 'Local government funding and financing' (2019)

<sup>4</sup> Auckland Council, Long Term Plan 2024-2034 Consultation Document, pg 15.

expenditure required for new asset investment and delivery. Additionally, while interest rates are high now, it is expected to reduce over the next several years meaning the debt servicing costs are expected to reduce for Council.

If higher rates increases are decided on then it is worth stating that every time the PSA surveys its membership, many of whom are homeowners themselves, a majority have consistently returned support for this. Why this occurs is two-fold –

- as public servants involved in the delivery of public services, our membership readily and acutely understands the direct linkage between the services and activities that rely on ratepayer funding and what the historic and likely future impacts will be on reduced funding - something that is generally not well understood or realised in the short-term by the general public.
- that reduced funding has a direct impact on their roles – there is no getting around the fact that our jobs are publicly funded and that reductions in the overall budget mean adverse impacts on employees' working lives, resulting in working conditions that become hostile to retention or attraction of talent that is required to deliver the very things Auckland want particularly at a time when Council already has double-digit attrition rate.

Nobody wants rates increases for the sake of it – rate increases do have material impacts on our membership in their personal lives whether they are homeowners or not. But it cannot be ignored that we get so many valuable things with our rates, and these are the types of things that make a city a place where people want to live. As a community, we need to be willing to recognise the value that local government services provide and resource them.

Ultimately, it is our view that rates rise under the "Do More" option is relatively affordable and promises an actual solution to the long-term needs and wants of the city. We do expect that within the "Do More" option, a greater than the proposed investment is made into both our people and the work that we do so we can get on delivering for Auckland and Aucklanders without constant fear of restructuring, job losses, workplace disruption and diminished working lives.

PSA supports 'Do More' for all seven services or activities being consulted on. It is untenable and unworkable to 'silo' off interdependent services and activities along a range of 'do less, do as proposed or do more' as each area is connected to other all others (some more directly) and requires each other to be correspondingly funded.

Some areas that PSA would like to see Council 'do less' in are:

- organisational usage and procurement of private consultants or 3<sup>rd</sup> party suppliers where such services or resources can be reasonably obtained in-house.

- pushing for housing developments at the fringe of Auckland where the infrastructure is seriously lacking and is inaccessible and unsuitable for working people.

## Follow-up questions

- *What is the plan to deliver new assets, infrastructure and services to accommodate Auckland's rapidly growing and changing population?*
- *Who is expected to bear the cost of non-investment in new assets or services required to accommodate a rapidly growing and changing Auckland population?*
- *Recognising that debt-to-revenue figures of 270% reducing to 250% by 2034 is the self-imposed limit, what is the exact rationale for choosing these exact figures?*
- *If the Central option proceeds, what exact services and activities are predicted to be reduced or non-delivered?*
- *How would the Council reconcile attempting to 'do less' in one area that is interdependent with an area that it wants to 'do as proposed' or 'do more'?*

## Q2 - Transport Plan

The PSA **supports most** of the proposal.

While the proposed \$50 weekly fare cap and introduction of diverse options for payment are a promising start, the PSA calls on Auckland Council / Transport to adopt the Free Fares campaign's platform of delivering free public transportation for Community Service Card holders, tertiary students, under-25s, and Total Mobility Card holders along with their support people. The central government's recent move to temporarily reduce public transport pricing shows that reducing fares can be affordable if we choose to prioritise it.

We urge Auckland Council/Auckland Transport to allocate funds for additional subsidies, extending beyond the current ones provided by the central government, to ensure that free or reduced-cost fares are accessible to a broader segment of our community. Implementing free fares would not only increase ridership but also play a crucial role in achieving the carbon zero 2050 goal outlined in Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan as well as address structural disadvantages in the transport system.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://freefaresnz.files.wordpress.com/2022/01/free-fares-submission-on-the-emissions-reduction-plan.pdf>



We would also like to at least a review, if not also an actual plan and commitment to delivering a surface light rail rapid transit network particularly along the Northwestern and the Mangere Corridors utilising the major project and design work already undertaken by Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi. Additionally, we support sufficient funding allocated to complete the City Rail Link and investment in transport networks to ensure our bus, rail and ferry lines are fast, frequent and reliable.

We oppose the proposed withdrawal of funding for further raised pedestrian crossings and new cycleways – particularly as these are legitimate and valuable transport options that need to be added to the portfolio of modal shifts away from private vehicle usage.

Additionally, as part of both a modal shift incentive into public transport and revenue generation, we also recommend that Auckland Transport:

- immediate implements paid parking in many of the areas identified in Auckland's draft Parking Strategy which have yet to be introduced.
- increase in fees for parking permits and further roll-out of Residential Parking Permit zones across more areas in central Auckland Isthmus.
- More red-light cameras be installed across the city, particularly at intersections with high traffic volumes and high accident incidents.

With the above into account, the PSA would find it difficult to support any increase or continuance of investment into expensive new infrastructure or maintenance for roading as it incentivises continued private vehicle usage.

### Q3 - North Harbour Stadium

The PSA selects **Other**

We would support/endorse any option that safeguards the working conditions and enables a better working environment for any Council kaimahi working with North Harbour Stadium.

Changing the operational management implies workplace restructuring and disruption to our members which is avoidable under the other two options of keeping the stadium as or redevelopment.

### Q4 – Major Investments

The PSA **strongly opposes/do not proceed** for:

- the proposed sell-down and transfer of AIAL shares; and
- the proposed leasing of Ports of Auckland operations

The PSA stands resolute with our sister unions at the Maritime Union of New Zealand and E tū in opposing the respective selling off of the remaining shares in Auckland Airport and Ports operations – which is nothing less than an ideologically driven and short-term thinking attempt to privatise our nationally significant services and assets. Should the proposal to privatise proceed, their members can count on the active support of the PSA and its members standing staunchly alongside them and joining the wider community campaign to prevent the selling off of the shares and port operations.

PSA stands firmly behind the idea of keeping crucial strategic assets under public ownership and control. We're against selling off assets that play a significant role in our economy, environment, culture, and social well-being of Auckland and Council must adopt an assessment criterion for any potential asset or service sales against these criteria to ensure they truly serve the best interests of the community. Crucially, there seems to be no proper assessment in the Plan of the lost opportunity and non-financial costs to the community should either the shares or Port operations be sold.

Moreover, the Airport and Port are nationally significant 'spillover' assets that enjoy effective natural monopolies which cannot be outcompeted by other market players – since no other port or airport exists in Auckland or the rest of the country can match the capacity and throughput of both entities. In effect the only thing that both ports can or should do is maximise their service provision, not necessarily try to maximise profit – but that is the opposite of what private shareholders and third parties will want to do and it will result in asset stripping, service reductions, closure of low-financially value but strategically valuable operations and attacks on working conditions to the point it becomes an underinvested mess – as has been the practice time-and-time again in New Zealand when it comes to natural monopolies.

Council, like central government did regarding national railways, will be faced with the choice of accepting the permanent state of rapidly escalating costs and disruption to Auckland consumers and businesses caused by a mismanaged strategic service; or in the more likely scenario, having to re-purchase (in the case of the AIAL shares) or re-investment (for the Ports at the end of the lease) at inflated costs as both assets will be at the bottom of their profitability.

We are not persuaded as to the merits of the proposed Auckland Future Fund – Council is neither a bank nor a hedge fund manager nor should it be. While PSA acknowledges the underlying rationale for the Fund is not entirely unreasonable and the self-insurance can cover significant premium costs and provide cover for future major weather events, whether this is best addressed through something like this Fund as proposed is debatable at best.

Crucially, we are not convinced that profit from the proposed sale of the shares and leasing of the ports are anywhere justified or sustainable against the steady and predictable dividends each respectively pays to Council, particularly over the long term. There is no guarantee that the

Fund will generate returns that reasonably beat the predicted dividends especially where there is limited investment opportunity due to Auckland's expectations as to what investments that Fund may or may not invest in as well as failure to account for administrative and operational costs involved in setting and managing the Fund. Alternatively, and more concerning to Aucklanders, such a Fund may be established with little-to-no transparency to the wider public especially where there is no clarity from the outset as to what framework and terms of reference could be placed to ensure that Fund does what is supposed to do and does not open itself to raiding by future cash-strapped Council.

If the Fund were to proceed, then it should be funded by selling down Council-owned assets that are neither financially nor strategically important (i.e. those that do not play a significant role in the economic, environmental, cultural and social well-being of Auckland). It can make sense to sell small-scale assets (e.g., a building or piece of land no longer needed), especially where the money raised would be placed into the Fund. An obvious example that PSA supports is the sale of Council-owned golf courses.

It is disappointing to see that the advice and development of the Plan, as regards the Ports of Auckland, does not appear to have included or referred to Maritime Union's 2023 report on "The Costs and risks of privatising Ports of Auckland operations".<sup>6</sup> It directly contradicts and provides actual substantive refutations to some of the Plan's conclusions of strategic assessment involved in the port operations option. We expect that this report is included and considered by the Governing Body in further deliberations and decision-making on the Port's future.

The most compelling reason for the PSA to oppose the privatisation of the Ports operations is the real risk of driving down wages and working conditions for the kaimahi at the Ports. Other than negotiating this into the possible lease agreement, which diminish the sale price of the lease, Council cannot reasonably assure Ports workers, their families and the wider Auckland public that this would not result in a 'scorched earth' of the Ports workers working conditions (particularly health and safety) by a private multinational that prioritises shareholder returns and does not nor could be reasonably made to have the legal obligations and public accountability that Council has. Even though such a decision does not directly impact Council staff, it is a matter of fundamental principle that unions champion solidarity across different sectors and that 'injury to one, is an injury to all' asks all kaimahi to stand together against decisions which sees ordinary working people bearing the brunt and costs of privatisation yet receiving none of the gain.

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<sup>6</sup> Victor Strategy and Communications on behalf Maritime Union of New Zealand, "The Costs and risks of privatising Ports of Auckland operations" (2023)

## Follow-up questions

- *What is the opportunity cost to Auckland should the Council no longer own the AIAL shares and POAL operations?*
- *What guarantees can the Council provide that the Fund would sustainably and consistently provide a better return than the direct dividends we receive from AIAL/POAL?*
- *What investments Fund should have or not have?*
- *How liquid will the Fund need to be for Council usage and what impacts are on this on the returns?*
- *Would this Fund have the unintended outcome of disincentivising the central government's role in supporting Auckland's future or responding to any major disasters?*
- *How will the Council manage the lease contract for POAL that aligns with Auckland's values?*
- *How can we ensure that the working conditions of POAL staff are not adversely impacted if operations are leased out to a private enterprise?*
- *How willing or able is the Council for legal wrangling and negotiations with a private operation over disputes over the operations lease now and over the next 35 years?*
- *If increased returns from the Ports are desired by the elected members, then why not require the Ports to raise its terminal fees?*
- *Do we want to sell assets and services that have yet to reach maximum profitability?*

## Q5 – Port Land

The PSA submits **No Change** in respect of Captain Cook and Marsden wharves and to **Keep** the Bledisloe Terminal within the port operational area.

The Plan's proposed transferring ownership from the Ports for the two wharves and releasing the Bledisloe Terminal contains no clear financial or strategic justification and risks the key concern of the PSA that of privatisation by a future Council of environmentally and economically strategic assets.

Losing control of the Bledisloe Terminal would likely cause operational day-to-day difficulties for work at the port leading to both financial and time costs to importers, exporters, businesses and consumers who rely on fast and effective port processing. It also undermines the ability of the Port to continue returning increasing dividends to the Council so in the situation where the Ports operations are retained under public ownership then the Bledisloe Terminal would have to remain under the Port's control and management.

## Q6 - Change to other rates, fees and charges

The PSA **supports** all proposed changes to business, targeted rates, fees and charges.

We welcome the resumption of the Targeted Rates for the Natural Environment and Water Quality Targeted Rate as these were politically difficult charges to win and we want a commitment from the Council that these are not suspended again in future without good reason.

Council should consider introducing further targeted rates where they can both distribute costs more equitably across the region as well as ensure increased contribution from those usages that result in significant environmental degradation – particularly in carbon emission profiling and targeting.

## Any other feedback

### An Auckland 'Just Transition Forum' and kaimahi engagement on climate

For Auckland to be able to deliver on its commitment under the Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan to reduce our emissions by 50% by 2030 and become net zero by 2050, as well as properly prepare our city for future adverse weather-adverse - the concept of 'just transition' must be properly understood as one which includes working people and their representatives as a distinct regional stakeholder to ensure fairness to workers and prioritisation equity and inclusion in all climate-specific and adjacent decision-making. In other words – to achieve a 'just transition' means the Council needs to engage directly with, including and sharing decision-making with working people and their representatives as distinct regional stakeholders.

To that end, the PSA calls on the Council to support the creation of mechanisms to directly engage and share climate decision-making with kaimahi and their union representatives. One example we would support is an 'Auckland Just Transition Forum' modelled on the central government's Tripartite Future of Work forum, to be led by the Council to bring together local businesses and trade unions to address climate adaptation and mitigation across the region – something which should be sited within the Climate Plan's governance framework. This forum would ensure direct engagement of workers and unions as key stakeholders in the city's

development, as well as provide the necessary skills and experience to assess and prepare for macroeconomic changes and ensure a more equitable implementation of climate actions.

### Living Wage accreditation

We acknowledge and thank the Council for the work done thus far to pay the living wage but seek a commitment that the Council continues to pay the Living Wage and extend it to all CCOs, sub-contractors and private contracting firms – making it a requirement of the contract, and that it be pegged – as a minimum – to the living wage set by Living Wage Aotearoa. We would also like to see the Council become a fully accredited Living Wage employer which it currently is not.

We note that the current Mayor during the local elections in 2022 made a public commitment to become an accredited Living Wage employer and signed the relevant pledge. We would like to remind the Mayor of this commitment and encourage the Governing Body to officially accredit the council this year.

### Pay equity

Achieving equal pay for our members is one of the PSA's four strategic goals. Equal pay is a human right and legal obligation and has been a longstanding concern of the PSA. Gender and ethnic pay gaps are strong indications that pay is discriminatory. All workers should be paid a fair and decent wage.

Auckland Council is one of six councils with which the PSA has an active pay equity claim to address the gender-based pay undervaluation of library assistants. The parties are currently in the bargaining phase of the claim. Although the full cost to councils will not be known until a settlement is reached, we recommend that the Long-Term Plan consider the likely need to fund increased pay rates for library workers in the near future.

We also recommend placing a priority in the Plan on working with the PSA to identify and close the gender pay gap.

We also advocate for greater pay transparency within the organisation and ask for the Governing Body to endorse the Public Service Commission's 'Kia Toipoto — Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021–24' specifically the 'Guidance on removing bias from remuneration and human resources policies and practices' and 'Guidance on flexible work and representation'.

### Workloads

Safe workloads are critical for the health and wellbeing of workers, and the sustainable functioning of council services. Councils need to set aside enough resources to maintain staffing levels that will meet the volume of work required without resorting to unsafe workloads.

## Exemplar employment relations

The PSA seeks exemplary employment relations. This includes the people doing the work participating in shaping services both directly and through their union. Workers will provide a unique perspective and have valuable knowledge about where council systems, processes and practices can be improved. We encourage Auckland Council to engage constructively with us and involve staff in operational decision-making, both generally and when it comes to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

## Responsible procurement

When the Council decides to outsource services, it needs to look beyond the price of the service and take a holistic view of what it offers to the community.

Auckland Council should incentivise contracts that:

- provide good wages and conditions for local workers.
- provide training and career pathways.
- ensure worker participation.
- provide decent and secure work
- reduce unemployment.
- provides “good work”, as described by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and the Future of Work Forum<sup>7</sup>
- uses tools such as the Gender Pay Principles to improve equity in the workplace<sup>8</sup>
- keep profits circulating within the local community.
- ensure adequate re-investment in infrastructure over the long term
- support local iwi and improve relationships between mana whenua and local councils.

We want assurance that the council will require contractors to follow 'responsible contractor' policies, including best practice employment requirements, health and safety best practices, and a commitment to workforce and career development and job security.

## Feedback about the Long-Term Plan & Annual Budget process

The PSA recommends extending the time and sequencing of engagement for the public consultation stage of LTP and Annual Budget processes.

Currently, the submission period is only one month long which in our view is highly insufficient and should be extended to allow enough time for consultees to properly review the often-complex topics and detailed supporting documents; and then be able to prepare a correspondingly detailed submission. Additionally, it is unusual and challenging to the public for a consultation process to hold oral submissions before the close of written submissions, causing

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<sup>7</sup> Future of Work Forum, 2022. [CTU's definition of good work](#)

<sup>8</sup> Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. [Kia Toipoto — Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021–24](#)

submitters to make arguments or present feedback without sufficient time to fully form their feedback nor be able to socialise it with their stakeholders.

To this, we suggest Council adopt the consultation timelines and processes as used by the New Zealand Parliament Select Committees whereby:

- The period for written submission is usually around 40-42 days;
- The oral submission opportunity occurs after this deadline for written submissions.

Further, the Auckland Council Public Service Association Pledge<sup>9</sup> sets out the Council's commitment to work in an active and high-engagement partnership model with the PSA. We believe this model is wider than just the operational side of the organisation and incorporates the elected officials of the council and key areas of the Governing Body work such as the Mayoral Proposal and LTP/ Budget process. Going forward, we consider it paramount in line with the Pledge that the PSA is engaged with a lot earlier, separately, and meaningfully in the Plan or Annual Budget development process.

Finally, the PSA submits that the consultation questions particularly those for the Overall direction of the LTP are potentially misleading and framed in such a way invite responses that are ill-reasoned or impossible to realise in practice.

Designing and presenting the Central option as the 'mid-point' between two extremes invites people to commit a logical fallacy as it is presenting the middle option as a more moderate and hence appetising choice simply because it is in the middle notwithstanding its and other options' respective merits. This is particularly misleading in this LTP process given the significant and complex information and background material for all the options that the public need to review in a short time frame.

Furthermore, the presentation of question 1B will present to Council's contradictory and self-defeating feedback, as it attempts to isolate seven activities or services that are highly interdependent and cannot be separated. For instance, delivering environmental protection and restoration without also addressing water management, or vice versa, would be extremely challenging if not impossible. Similarly, transport and city/local development, as well as council support and economic development, all require effective funding and delivery of one another – meaning if respondents select 'do less' for one area they are in effect selecting do less delivery in all other areas even if that is not their intended response.

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<sup>9</sup> The Auckland Council Public Service Association Pledge (March 2018)



**Thank you for considering our submission.**

**We wish to acknowledge the hard work and excellent contributions of our Auckland Council PSA Delegates and Members in preparing this submission.**

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