

Te Ngākau Kahukura submission on Auckland Council's Ngā Hapori Momoho | Thriving Communities draft strategy

Moira from [Te Ngākau Kahukura](#) offered the following response to Auckland Council's online consultation in December 2021 on their [Ngā Hapori Momoho | Thriving Communities draft strategy](#).

1. The strategy is focused on achieving four Thriving Communities outcomes over the next 10 years. Overall, how much do you agree or disagree with these outcomes?

Somewhat agree

These outcomes are useful and well articulated. One concept that could be named more explicitly from a rainbow perspective is safety - this was the key overall theme identified in the Three Questions report that looked at rainbow Aucklanders' needs (<https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/2042/3questions-auckland-rainbow-communities-advisory-panel-aug-2018.pdf>), and is commonly echoed in other research findings and community kōrero. This could fit well into the 'whanaungatanga' outcome as it speaks to the quality of relationships that exist within communities (i.e. Aucklanders are safe, connected and feel as though they belong)

2. These outcomes will be achieved through acting on the Thriving Communities draft objectives. Overall, how much do you agree or disagree with these objectives?

Somewhat agree

These objectives are helpful. From a rainbow community perspective, I would suggest expanding "Improve health outcomes" to "Improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities" to emphasise the need for focus on those populations who disproportionately experience negative health outcomes.

3. What kind of activities would you like to see from council under the objective area *Increase financial security*?

Create employment opportunities for rainbow people (particularly transgender and intersex people) and support programmes to reduce discrimination in workplaces - those that are Council-run and other workplaces across Auckland. Advocate to central government for benefit increases, welfare reform and improved rights for renters.

4. What kind of activities would you like to see from council under the objective area *Improve health outcomes*?

Continue supporting community-led projects to address rainbow homelessness and housing insecurity. Prioritise rainbow communities in initiatives around safety, including in urban design. Do not provide platforms for extremist ideologies and rhetoric – for example, ensure that extremist anti-transgender groups are not able to use Council-owned venues for events.

5. What kind of activities would you like to see from council under the objective area *Increase access and participation?*

Audit all Council and CCO-run spaces and services, including public transport for rainbow safety and inclusion - this should consider environmental design (for example, gender-neutral and inclusive changing facilities and bathrooms), staff attitudes and practices, and operational policies. Review how rainbow demographic data is collected and update this across all systems to reflect the newest Stats NZ standards (for example, this survey does not reflect the new standards). Consider how to improve safety and support for elected officials and candidates who are from marginalised identities, particularly transgender and intersex people.

6. What kind of activities would you like to see from council under the objective area *Grow community and intercultural connection?*

Provide funding for community-led projects that build cohesion across community groups, led by people who belong to both communities - for example support groups like Rainbow Path (who provide peer support and advocacy for rainbow refugees and asylum seekers) to bring together conversations between rainbow and refugee communities. Support takatāpui visibility and aspirations as part of supporting mana whenua and Māori. Continue supporting rainbow community events (such as Pride Centres) as spaces for others to see and connect with rainbow communities.

7. What kind of activities would you like to see from council under the objective area *Enable local leadership and innovation?*

Engage with rainbow community leaders and the rainbow support sector as part of this area of activity, being mindful that this looks different to engaging with other communities or sectors. Support development of leadership, community organising and NGO governance skills. Improve access for rainbow community groups to Council-based funding to increase the financial security of the rainbow support sector.

8. What kind of activities would you like to see from council under the objective area *Increase community resilience and sustainability?*

Support community-led initiatives to challenge and reduce rainbow-targeted discrimination and prejudice, and to strengthen inclusion across communities and whānau. Rainbow people can face barriers to participation in any of the activities supported by this plan. Reducing discrimination will increase resilience and allow rainbow people to bring their ideas and energy to addressing sustainability and other future challenges.

9. Council needs to make some key shifts in the way we work to deliver this strategy. How much do you agree that these key shifts will help council to achieve the strategy's outcomes?

Somewhat agree

These shifts appropriately emphasise community expertise and aspirations, while recognising that Council and others have roles to play in supporting communities to lead. At the same time, it's important Council maintains expertise, even if the nature of that expertise shifts. Council needs to

be expert at community engagement, and have enough depth of knowledge and relationships to be able to can work with different communities effectively. This might be better reflected if the third shift was worded in a way that recognised ongoing relationships between Council and communities.

10. We also know that we need to be conscious about how we use our resource and have proposed four principles to guide our investment. How much do you agree with the investment principles?

Definitely agree

These are strong principles that align with what the strategy is trying to achieve.

11. Overall, do you support the draft strategy?

Somewhat disagree

It provides a good framework for Council to support community aspirations. Within this, more work is needed to clearly name rainbow communities as one of the groups this strategy seeks to work with, and to articulate what the strategy will mean for rainbow communities. While the development of this strategy has engaged with some rainbow community organisations (and presumably the Council's own Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel), the only reference I could find to rainbow communities was in a graph in p26 about discrimination. There was no background about rainbow demographics and challenges beyond this, and there were no named actions that spoke to rainbow communities or how issues like housing, belonging and health affect rainbow people.

It would be helpful to see more specific actions named, or rainbow issues reflected in the actions that are named. The rainbow population is not currently reflected in the "Who is Tāmaki-Makaurau" page at all (nor are disabled communities), which gives the unintended impression that rainbow communities are not part of this strategy. Similarly, the "Not all Aucklanders are thriving" section only has one brief mention of the LGBTQ+ population in a graph, despite rainbow communities being disproportionately impacted across all of the named issues (see RIMU research:

<https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/publications/auckland-s-rainbow-communities-challenges-and-opportunities/> and a range of newer research including the new Household Economic Survey data (<https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/lgbt-plus-population-of-aotearoa-year-ended-june-2020>).

While the overall framework and strategy is good as a general approach towards communities, it is difficult to support the draft strategy in its current form while it does not adequately reflect or include rainbow communities. Without inclusion at this level, it is hard to be confident that Council's activities and investment will include or prioritise rainbow communities.

12. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

I'd welcome any further opportunities to engage with Council on finalising this plan. Having been interviewed early in the strategy development process and attending community workshops about it, I feel quite disappointed that the draft strategy does not reflect rainbow communities as part of the diversity that it seeks to engage with. It wouldn't be hard to address this, and would be important for Council's ongoing work with rainbow communities.