



Open Government Partnership New Zealand
C/- State Services Commission
Wellington

OGP1 Reference
Email Address
ogpnz@ssc.govt.nz
Date

17/10/2018
Fortress Social Services Charitable
Trust
PO Box 331391
Takapuna, 0740
AUCKLAND

MATTER: SUBMISSIONS ON DRAFT NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2018-20

Dear State Services Commission (**SSC**),

Fortress Social Services Charitable Trust (**FSS**) makes the following points in this submission on the Draft Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2018-2020 (**the Plan**) conducted as part of the SSC's responsibility in relation to the . FSS applauds SSC's approach to the Open Government Partnership stressing participation. FSS believes that it is only through encouraging ethnic minorities to participate proactively in the democratic process that we can ensure that they form a true part of our democratic polity. In particular, FSS applauds Commitments designed to enhance public engagement at a policy level and to provide greater understanding of the democratic process. FSS is concerned to ensure that so far as possible such Commitments take specific account of linguistic minorities in design of service provision.

FSS has the following recommendations in regard to the Plan. FSS is of the opinion that:

- 1 – *Design of the School Leaver's Toolkit should take into account the possibility of it being made available to migrants arriving in New Zealand on temporary visas (not only those on student visas);*
- 2 – *Design of the School Leaver's Toolkit take account of the manner in which different cultural backgrounds may influence understanding of civics;*
- 3 – *Design of the School Leaver's Toolkit should ensure that civics is taught in a way that is respectful and protective of diversity (rather than imposing values uncritically);*
- 4 – *Standards set for the competencies outlined in the School Leaver's Toolkit should be clear and transparent;*
- 5 – *Agencies exploring the implementation of Commitments 1, 4, 5 and 6 should explore methods by which the information provided can be made more accessible to speakers of minority languages (including Te Reo Maori); and*
- 6 – *Agencies implementing Commitments 5 and 6 should intentionally consult with linguistic minority communities on how programmes designed under these commitments can ensure that those unable to speak English fluently can easily access these programmes.*

FSS is a charitable trust assisting Asian minorities to access legal services. FSS has noted that there is a major discrepancy in understanding of the New Zealand legal system between those who are fluent in English and those who are not. FSS also works alongside many who are unfamiliar with their basic legal rights – for example employment rights – by reason of their having received secondary education in other countries.

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FSS therefore believes it is imperative that resources provided to school students be also available to new immigrants so that the basic systems and processes of our polity are not unknown to them.

Please contact us if you have any questions or queries regarding this submission. FSS would be delighted to be given more time to prepare longer submissions or make a presentation to SSC to further describe the nature of our recommendations.

Yours faithfully

FORTRESS SOCIAL SERVICES CHARITABLE TRUST

John Hall
Trustee

Email: admin@fortresssocialservices.org