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Submission to PNCC Draft Annual Budget 2022-23

To: Palmerston North City Council

Contact Details:

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Overview: We support the majority of the proposed draft annual budget but would like the addition of a budget line to develop a city-wide food resilience policy.

Background:

Environment Network Manawatu (ENM) is the environment hub for the Manawatū Region with the key purpose of facilitating and enabling communication, cooperation, and increasing collective action amongst its member groups and the wider community. ENM provides leadership by underpinning, fostering, and encouraging environmental initiatives in the region and our 60 current member groups are from throughout the Manawatū River Catchment with interests including biodiversity regeneration, freshwater management, citizen science, food security and resilience, sustainable living, alternative energies, and active transport. The network is organised into two collective focus areas: Manawatū Food Action Network and Manawatū River Source to Sea.

Manawatū Food Action Network (MFAN) is a collective of social service and environmental organisations (and other community stakeholders) working together to increase collaboration, education and awareness around issues of food security, food resilience and food localisation. Currently MFAN's main focus is preparation and implementation of a strategy to improve Kai Security in the 4412 postcode of Palmerston North.

ENM's constitutional purposes are to:

- coordinate and communicate the efforts of the member groups to enhance the local environment:
 - actively protect, maintain, restore and enhance the environment of the Manawatū
 - promote ideas to the wider community to encourage them to participate in environmental projects
 - develop concerted long-term plans of action to enhance the environment and actively progress the implementation of these plans
 - encourage the provision of “green” areas for passive recreation
 - work together to identify, initiate, support, implement and maintain environmental projects that benefit the wider community
 - initiate, develop, implement and participate in environmental education
- act as a central point of access to environmental information.
- advocate for ecological sustainability and matters of agreed environmental significance.
- work in partnership with iwi to recognise kaitiakitanga and environmental aims and objectives in common.
- liaise with similar organisations elsewhere in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world as appropriate to source and share ideas for environmental projects and issues.

Submission:

We support the majority of the proposed draft annual budget but would like the addition of a budget line to *develop a city-wide food resilience policy*. The purpose of this would be to enable the work highlighted in the recently released 4412 Kai Resilience Strategy to be broadened to encompass the whole city and lay the foundations for the city to implement this policy in the future. Some arguments to support this inclusion are outlined below.

- The right to food is a human right. It protects the right of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. The right to food is not about charity, but about ensuring that all people have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity. As such, having a policy around food resilience that can speak to and support this right is of utmost importance.
- Food resilience stems from the ability of communities to produce their own food, and as such is dependent on appropriate land for this production. PNCC are kaitiaki over much of the land within this city and are, to an extent, able to regulate land use. Given the power PNCC have, it is appropriate they have a policy in place to ensure that its' citizens can take an active part in growing their own food if they so wish.
- Palmerston North is a city that boasts a wide range of food-related industries, hosts a university with a centre on food research, and is surrounded by fertile land that produces

food. Having a policy on food resilience would be a good fit with our regions status as a “food basket”.

- As an organisation that works alongside and supports other organisations helping the most vulnerable in our communities, we know the additional stresses that food insecurity is having on those whose lives are already heavily stressed. Food insecurity is a growing problem and one that has numerous detrimental flow-on effects for those individuals it directly affects, and the wider communities within our city. Having a policy in place to support programs that help move communities from food insecurity to food resilience and beyond is a social investment in these communities that will contribute to a safe future for our city and all its citizens.

Context:

The recently released 4412 Kai Resilience Strategy has outlined some of the challenges that citizens within this rohe face with food insecurity issues. A major theme that was discovered was that Food Insecurity is not the issue, but a symptom of the deeper issues that divide our communities. However, if we create a robust strategy to alleviate food insecurity, it gives whānau the time and space to focus on overcoming the greater challenges they face. In the long-term people with access to cheaper, healthier food are better equipped to positively contribute to our community.

The 4412 Kai Resilience Strategy recommendations have been made with the consultation of the community and outline what have been identified as the next steps in moving communities from food insecurity to food security, and beyond. There are over 100 existing and potential initiatives that this report has identified as being of importance within the 4412 area alone. The Manawatū Food Action Network will work towards supporting the implementation of this important document; however, this is work we see as being bigger than just within the 4412 area. Although our organisation can and does directly support some of these projects, there is more work to do than our current staffing and budget allows.

The right to food *is* a human right. It protects the right of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. The right to food is not about charity, but about ensuring that all people have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity. In a world facing the challenges of a climate unstable future, and still facing the supply line uncertainties caused by a global pandemic, supporting citizens to be food resilient and food secure is not an abstract goal, it is an immediate need we must plan to address now.

We as a community have an obligation to ensure all members have access to healthy food. As the leaders of our community, it is imperative that the Palmerston North City Council recognises its responsibility to ensure our people are well fed. A citywide Food Resilience Policy will ensure we are doing everything we can to support those within our community that are struggling to feed their whānau.