



Self-determination in Te Tairāwhiti |
Social services devolution – the roadmap and evidence

13 October 2023 | v1.0



Foreword

The importance of taking action

This roadmap is an attempt to move beyond the theory of supporting locally-led delivery in our region, toward the practice of a substantial and sustainable devolution of social services to iwi. Devolution can mean many things, in our case it means recognising iwi partnerships under Te Tiriti and the mana motuhake of iwi to support our own people in our own way by passing on the authority and resources that the crown currently uses.

We commissioned the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research to complete a study of what the government spends in social services in our region. These figures are not easy to find (by anyone, including government) but they estimate the spend is \$1.17B annually. We are the current providers and supporters of Whānau Ora, however, it is clear that our Whānau Ora commissioned programmes are a fraction of the contracts and services that are in use by ourselves and others in our region. We want to expand the whānau-centred approach in all of our social development initiatives. We want to think bigger!

We are aware that currently in our region the Ministry of Social Development alone has approximately 150 contracts with around 25

providers and worth about \$50M (evidence of the fragmented and non-material nature of current practices). While better contracting practices, such as the relational commissioning approach, would help with those current contracts, devolution to iwi is more than that. It is about a progressive movement from government delivery of social services to iwi delivery of social services, not contracting for add-ons.

In our region, devolution to iwi makes sense since more than half of our population is māori and a vast majority of social services users are māori. Our ambition is a substantial transfer of authority, responsibility and resources in social services so that we can successfully provide for those who use current government systems. We need to have a similar level of resources and authority, the same longevity of provision. We cannot resolve the issues of more than a century of colonisation and racism with short-term, narrowly focused contracts with a tiny fraction of the funds and responsibility that the crown currently has. From a financial lens, 'substantial in scale' is in the hundreds of millions of dollars, not contracts sliced into tiny fractions of the government's budget in our region.



Foreword

The importance of taking action

We understand that this is challenging to conceive of and we are committed to a careful process of devolution that meets the needs of both the government and iwi. We are already accountable to many and understand government may want to see this demonstrated. Our accountability needs to be focused on whānau outcomes, alongside fiscal accountability.

This roadmap is a comprehensive examination of what we want, why we want it, and examples of our past performance as iwi social service providers (and the background material to back up the case we are making). We have given a very high-level process map (the roadmap itself) but this document is deliberately light on how this will work. That is because over the next year we want to co-design how this would work with agencies in a series of detailed feasibility studies. We want to start with areas where we are already strong – whānau ora delivery and child wellbeing. We also want to expand our housing programme to include the crown assets currently managed by Kāinga Ora.

Ronald Nepe
Chief Executive,
Te Rūnanga o Tūrangānui a Kiwa

We want to develop our capability and capacity by establishing the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board where we will have a much stronger leadership role in the delivery of the remaining government programmes of social support in our region.

We are not asking for the green light on these programmes at this stage, rather, we are asking for a clear indication from government that it is willing to make real its stated commitment to iwi partnerships under Te Tiriti and mana motuhake in social services. We are asking if it is prepared to progress these topics through the co-development and funding of the feasibility studies in our chosen areas.

That's our wero – are you really ready to work with us to make a strategic, substantial and sustainable change to the way in which social services are delivered in Te Tairāwhiti? Are you ready to work towards devolution in a meaningful way, trusting that we have both the right and the mana to make this work? If so, ka mau te wehi, let's begin!

George Reedy
Chief Executive,
Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou



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Section 1: Executive summary



1.0 | Executive summary

What's the big idea

Improving social wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti through social services devolution to iwi.

We are asking the Social Wellbeing Board to be bold and to act on commitments past and present to a significantly more devolved delivery of social services in Te Tairāwhiti. Evidence supports the change and risks can be mitigated. The first step is to resource the co-design of four feasibility studies to create the detailed plan of how devolution would work in child wellbeing, Whānau Ora, housing, and the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board. If we take these steps, intergenerational harm and persistent disadvantage could be transformed into intergenerational mauri ora.

» Te Tairāwhiti needs urgent action

Our region is rich in culture and history; being home to many taonga and a cultural hub of art and practices such as kapa haka, whakairo, tā moko, and waka ama. We have a well-developed economy and are world-leading in aspects of horticulture and engineering. As the region with the highest māori population in Aotearoa, our whānau have deep iwi roots and connections to both place and people.

Our region also continues to grapple with longstanding and complex social issues – housing, child wellbeing, addictions, and family harm being priorities – as well as broader economic deprivation. These impacts are the result of colonisation (historic and ongoing); māori dispossession of land, resources, and power; and persistent racism.

Importantly, existing social services have long failed to fully meet whānau needs creating systemic disadvantage that persists across generations. This has left our whānau cycling through services that respond to, rather than proactively tackle, their issues; if they are able to access these services at all. As such, our people's capability, mana, and self-determination have been eroded over time.

The seminal report on the failures of the social services system from an iwi perspective came in 1988 – Te Puao-te-Ata-tu (Daybreak) report. Sadly, it is the very same issues that the committee highlighted then that we are seeking to address today, 35 years later.

The significant and sustained levels of deprivation in Te Tairāwhiti* underscore the fact that previous approaches and the current state of social services are simply not good enough.

This calls for a paradigm shift to stop existing inequities becoming further entrenched for future generations. We need transformative action, and we need it now. We are, therefore, calling for the devolution of social services to iwi as the solution for our region.

* Te Tairāwhiti has the highest levels of deprivation of any district (65% of the total population), with māori over-represented in these statistics. Of the 33,000 people in Te Tairāwhiti living in material hardship (deciles 8-10), 77% are māori.

1.0 | Executive summary

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» Why devolution is the answer

Our call for devolution is aligned with the government's commitment to engaging in partnership with iwi – based on Te Tiriti – and is reflected in the vision statements of agencies, such as that of Toi Hau Tāngata the Social Wellbeing Agency that "people, whānau and communities live the life to which they aspire"¹.

By devolution we specifically mean the transfer of funding, resourcing, and decision-making power to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti to engineer whānau-led solutions tailored to the local context and circumstances.

We acknowledge this will take time and careful planning, requiring staged implementation and new mechanisms for accountability and risk management co-designed with government.

That's why we are asking for funding to co-design the feasibility studies for the four areas where we seek devolution. The feasibility studies vary in complexity and in total we are seeking somewhere between \$1.12 and \$1.52 million to complete all four in the next year.

Within this, we see the establishment of a local board – the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board – which will include representatives of iwi and leaders of social services agencies, to assist the transition to full devolution to iwi over time. We propose the role of the crown in achieving this outcome is to recognise the authority of iwi in the development and delivery of social services, and to stand alongside iwi on the journey, providing support as needed. How we achieve this is outlined in the sections that follow.

The Board is an interim step to devolution of services. It is not a substitute to devolution to iwi. Rather, there are three devolution activities in the proposed phase one and instead of simply waiting until they

have been completed before starting the next areas the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board allows for an increased role by iwi and others in the region, in the decision making for the remainder of public sector social development.

The general principle is that the public sector leaders in our region work with iwi and others to make collective decisions on how social development spending happens in the region. This would require an unlinking from nationally-set priorities and activities in order for regional priorities to take precedence. The feasibility study would need to develop work-arounds for national and institutional requirements and accountabilities such as the Public Finance Act 1989.

Our case for devolution is based on decades of research (by iwi, NGOs, and state-commissioned reviews) that show these concepts are not new, nor revolutionary, and will be effective in Te Tairāwhiti because:

1. Iwi have the mana, capability, maturity, expertise, and trust required to lead social services locally, (see section 2.3 for a selection of by iwi, for iwi initiatives in the region);
2. There is a substantive local evidence base on what works and what doesn't, based on systems improvement methodology and continuous learnings through Manaaki Tairāwhiti, the iwi-led Place-Based Initiative; and
3. Our region is demographically unique, highly-connected, and ideally-positioned to be the test case for devolution on a smaller scale.

Devolution of social services to iwi has the potential to drive transformative change within a generation, lifting the wellbeing of whānau, hapū, and iwi. In short, it will allow for all whānau in Te Tairāwhiti to flourish.

1.0 | Executive summary

How we get there

Our pathway to devolution and four focus areas.

Our pathway to social service devolution in Te Tairāwhiti is illustrated in the figure below, along with our four focus areas: child wellbeing, Whānau Ora services, housing, and establishing the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board. The stages and decision points in our pathway are described in further detail in section 2.2 of this document.

PATHWAY TO DEVOLUTION

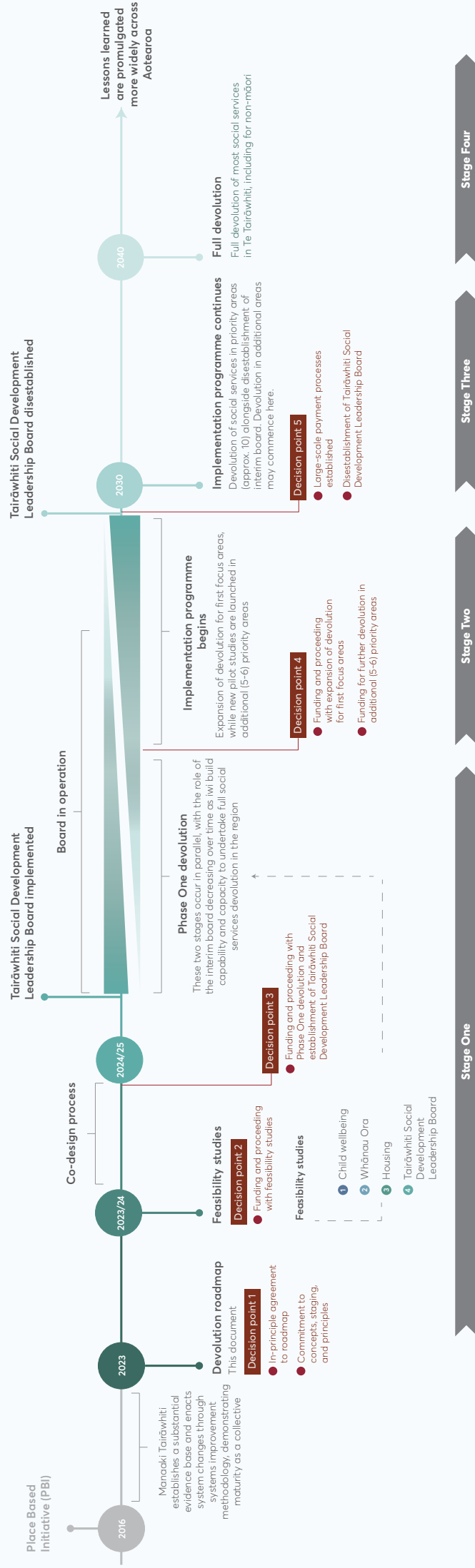


Figure 1. Our pathway to devolution in Te Tairāwhiti indicating decision points for the Social Wellbeing Board, rūnanga and iwi boards, and Manaaki Tairāwhiti board at each stage.

1.0 | Executive summary

The need to take action

Not making significant change remains the bigger risk.

» Why here?

Te Tairāwhiti's geography, demography and connectedness mean that we are uniquely positioned to generate transformation at a whānau and regional level. We are relatively small in population (estimated at just over 50,000) but have complex social development needs.

Equally, our geographic isolation from other regions means that any potential risks from a new social services policy such as this are likely to be easily contained, with limited impacts on neighbouring regions. These factors mean that, as an early adopter of bolder policy initiatives, there is both the potential for rich learning and effective risk management from a central government perspective.

Iwi and hapū in the region have trusted relationships with the whānau we serve, as well as with each other and government agencies, and, therefore, we have the highest level of accountability to our place and people.

There has also been a substantial accumulation of knowledge, skills, and capability within Te Tairāwhiti, alongside a robust evidence base of practices and approaches that work. Te Tairāwhiti has a demonstrable track record in delivering on programmes of work in regional transformation.

Te Tairāwhiti provides the ideal test case in terms of demonstrated need, containment, proven track record and maturity, and iwi and community commitment for the long-haul. In essence, there is no better regional context to showcase the effectiveness of an iwi-led approach to social services.



Image: Gladstone Road in Gisborne

1.0 | Executive summary

The need to take action

Not making significant change remains the bigger risk.

» Why now?

We have mounting evidence of the system failing our whānau (see for example, section 3.2). On top of this, measures of regional wellbeing – through the Tairāwhiti Wellbeing Survey² – show that Te Tairāwhiti is lagging behind the national average on most domains of wellbeing. In short, things are not going well in most areas.

The impacts of recent adverse weather events have been extensive and catastrophic. Adverse weather events are likely to increase in frequency and magnitude in the future, creating further challenges for our most vulnerable whānau, and increasing pressure on social services in the region. Our region needs new ways of building back.

There is an urgent need to take action and to build on the momentum developed through regional leadership, to create truly transformative change within one generation. Let's break the cycle of welfare dependency for whānau and, instead, assist them with self-determination and capabilities to achieve their aspirations.

Our call for devolution is not a radical one, but simply a more effective and streamlined approach to the contracting, scaling, and resourcing of existing initiatives and services – such as Whānau Ora and the Toitū Tairāwhiti housing initiatives which have already demonstrated success in the region.

While there are some inherent risks with shifting to an alternative social service approach, this should be evaluated in comparison to the ongoing failures of current systems to deliver equitable outcomes for māori.

Viewed through this lens, and considering the failures and harms perpetuated by the status quo, the logical and moral option is to test the alternative approach of devolving social services to iwi. Not doing so now remains the bigger risk for intergenerational and regional wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti.

1.0 | Executive summary

What we hope to achieve

Self-determination is both an acknowledgement of Tiriti partnership and a pathway to improving wellbeing.

Improved wellbeing of our people through self-determination is the vision, reflecting a genuine partnership between iwi and the crown.

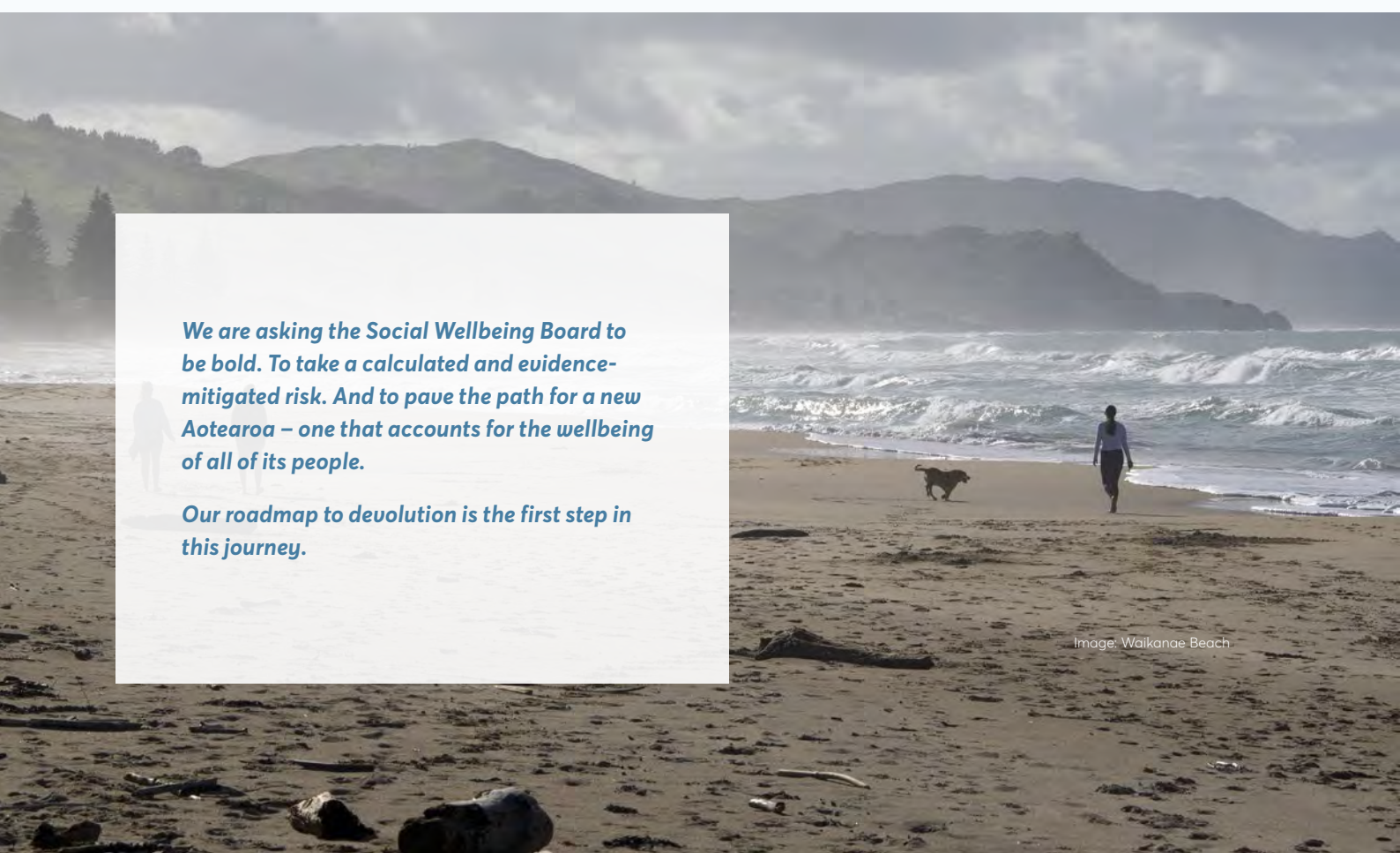
For iwi, improved wellbeing looks like:

- **Breaking the (intergenerational) cycles of crisis** through early response, prevention, and wrap-around support for family violence, addictions, and other health issues;
- **Increasing independence** through strength-based approaches that assist whānau to achieve self-determination; and
- **Moving toward mauri ora** where whānau not only have their basic needs met (e.g., housing, safety, employment) but are able to meet their own aspirations and lead fulfilling lives, in line with what it is they value.

Devolution is the path that gets us there. In the first instance, devolution is a means of achieving tino rangatiratanga for whānau, hapū, and iwi in Te Tairāwhiti. The value of realising iwi ambitions and giving effect to partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi are significant.

We are also likely to see a range of wellbeing benefits in the longer term and at all levels (whānau, hapū, iwi, and regional), arising from iwi designing and delivering our own solutions. Indeed, there is considerable evidence of iwi- and community-designed initiatives that lift whānau wellbeing (detailed in section 2.3).

What is good for whānau, hapū, and iwi is also good for the rest of Aotearoa. Issues that confront whānau, hapū, and iwi are issues that others in Aotearoa also face. As a nation we stand to gain considerably from eliminating persistent disadvantage. Testing devolution on a local scale in Te Tairāwhiti presents a unique opportunity to disrupt this cycle.



We are asking the Social Wellbeing Board to be bold. To take a calculated and evidence-mitigated risk. And to pave the path for a new Aotearoa – one that accounts for the wellbeing of all of its people.

Our roadmap to devolution is the first step in this journey.

1.0 | References

» Endnotes

- 1 Toi Hau Tāngata Social Wellbeing Agency. (n.d.). 'About Us | Social Wellbeing Agency', <https://www.swa.govt.nz/about/about-the-social-wellbeing-agency/>
- 2 Trust Tairāwhiti. (2023). 'Tairāwhiti wellbeing data: 2022', <https://www.tairawhitidata.nz/>

Section 2:

The roadmap

In this section:

2.1 The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti | p14

2.2 Our devolution roadmap | p26

2.3 Evidence of capability | p48

2.1

The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti



2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

Devolution as a pathway to self-determination and wellbeing

We begin section 2.1 by setting the scene for our case for devolution of social services to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti, outlining the strategic alignment of this approach as well as the strategic fit of Te Tairāwhiti as a region.

» What we mean by devolution

Our scope and evidence base for devolution.

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> this discussion starts on page 15

» Strategic alignment

How devolution is aligned with current policies and sector thinking.

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> this discussion starts on page 20

» Strategic fit

Why Te Tairāwhiti is ideally placed to be the test case for regional devolution.

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> this discussion starts on page 22

The logic behind a different approach to social wellbeing and tackling persistent disadvantage is built on decades of iwi and NGO research and state-commissioned reviews, beginning with the release of Te Puao-te-Ata-tu in 1988*.

We know that the current social services system – designed to provide low-cost, uniform delivery of services – is failing those with multiple, complex needs and māori in particular (see section 3.2). This is because our accountability mechanisms focus on outcomes that fail to hear and respond to whānau voice and do not use whānau voice as the foundation to a pathway forward.

Further, these mechanisms: are frequently not grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi; limit learning and adaptation; and conflate reporting with being held to account (see section 2.2). In short, these systems are not fit for purpose. We also know the status quo needs to change (see sections 3.2 and 3.3).

The Waitangi Tribunal inquiry into health services and outcomes has reiterated that the multiple breaches of Te Tiriti by the crown has contributed to the inequitable health status of māori. The Hauora report calls for an approach that "genuinely empowers tino rangatiratanga – which means nothing less than Māori having decision-making power over their affairs, including hauora Māori"³.

What we need now is not more evidence for the case to do things differently, but a willingness to act and a clear agreed path forward. This is what we are asking of the Social Wellbeing Board.

Our case for devolution is based on an analysis of multiple alternative options (see section 3.1), with social service devolution to iwi emerging as the option most likely to give effect to iwi partnerships under Te Tiriti and deliver transformative change for wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti within one generation.

Our roadmap for devolution draws on a robust evidence base of research and on-the-ground insights into whānau experiences with social services in the region. It harnesses the momentum gained through by iwi, for iwi initiatives and social service provision (see section 2.3). It also builds on the collective knowledge, skills base, and capabilities developed within Te Tairāwhiti.

* Te Puao-te-Ata-tu released in 1988 represents a seminal commentary on racism within New Zealand society. Commissioned as a ministerial review into racism within the then-Department of Social Welfare, the report identifies that the inequities and disparities experienced by māori are underpinned by the ongoing of colonisation, racism, as well as the failing systems of state service provision.

2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

What we mean by devolution

Devolution exists on a continuum involving more or less transfer of decision-making power and authority at all stages of social service provision, from design to commissioning, delivery, and governance. We distinguish here between the devolution of service provision without power – essentially a “passing of the buck” – and genuine devolution of power and decision-making authority, which recognises the tino rangatiratanga of whānau, hapū, and iwi.

Devolving services alone, such as in the case of contracting, pre-determines the levels of service and outputs, instead of focusing on transformative outcomes valued by whānau. Contracts themselves are often granular. This results in a piecemeal approach to whānau assistance, and the opposite of a holistic approach to improving wellbeing.

Our call for devolution involves the crown handing on not just the delivery but also the design and commissioning of social services. We ask for the allocation and authorisation of the necessary power and decision-making to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti, so that whānau and the local community can engineer their own solutions to social issues. Devolution means not handing over current services but the power to design the necessary solutions as we see fit.

In our new world, we see that the government has the role of supporting this devolution by funding and walking beside iwi and whānau, rather than making decisions for them. Whānau Ora is a good example of a degree of successful devolution, however, it is not at a scale or permanent and systemic enough, in its current form, to fulfill our needs.

Not all services can/are appropriate to be devolved, and there will likely need to be a mix of devolved and centrally-designed services, depending on whānau needs and preferences, as well as the capability and capacity of local providers. The likely pathways for these services is explored in the figure at right. However, the specific mix of services, the financial and operating models, as well as the resourcing requirements will need to be determined with iwi.

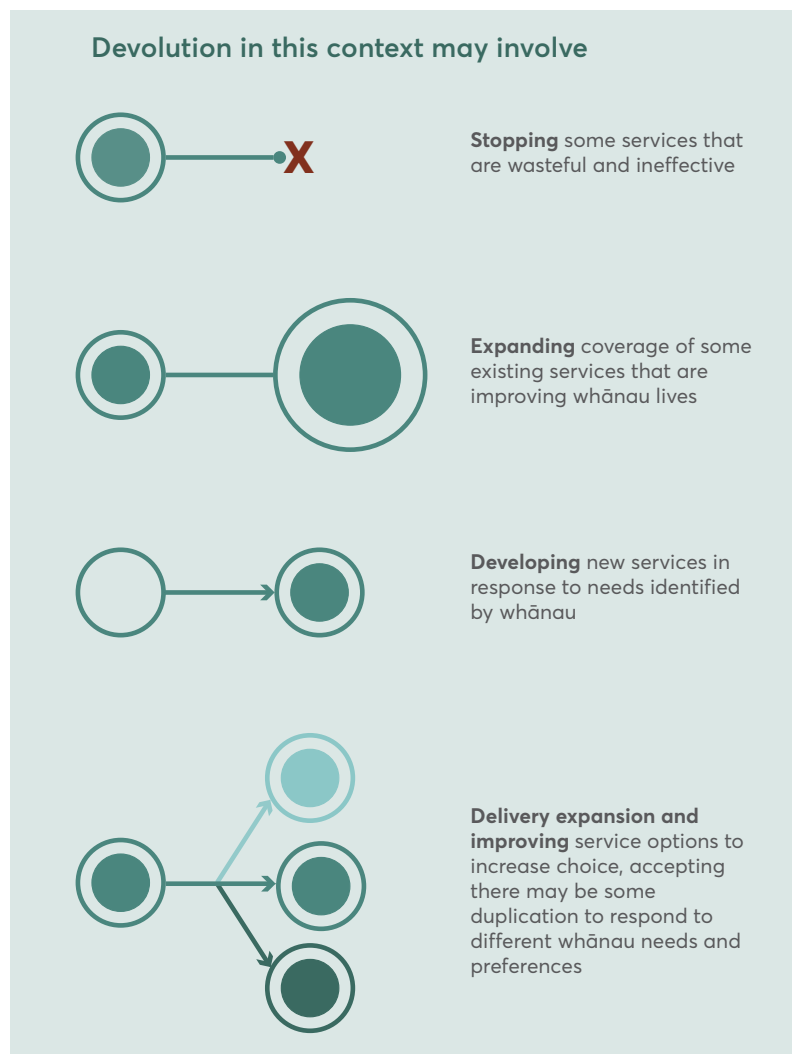


Figure 2. What the devolution of services (existing and new) might entail.

Our roadmap is also focused specifically on iwi within Te Tairāwhiti. We are not making the case on behalf of all iwi in Aotearoa and do not take the responsibility for promulgating their case. Rather, we are offering a way forward for our region, which can provide evidence and insights for government that may be able to be used in other regions.

Finally, we note that devolution here is not our end goal, rather it is the means of ensuring self-determination by whānau, hapū, and iwi, which evidence supports will more likely create mauri ora (wellbeing). This is our pathway to improving regional wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti.

2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

Requirements for devolution to be successful

To achieve the best possible outcomes from design and delivery to governance, we look at when devolving services might be most appropriate, along with the necessary conditions for successful devolution.

» When devolution works best

Variations on centralised service provision work best and are more efficient when the exact services required are well known and can be standardised to deliver economies of scale. However, this requires groups to be homogenous and receive the same level and type of service (horizontal equity).

Ultimately, decades of evidence have shown a failure of entirely centralised social and health service provision: both in terms of breaching Te Tiriti and in creating intergenerational health and social inequities for māori and vulnerable population groups.

In contrast, the circumstances when devolution works best are outlined in the figure overleaf. Therefore, the focus with devolution is on vertical equity: tailoring the provision of social services based on whānau need and circumstances, within a context of navigating a challenging social services system.

» Conditions for successful devolution

The 2022 New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) review of devolution of social services sheds insight on some of the conditions necessary for successful devolved initiatives. These are illustrated in the same figure overleaf.

These are generic conditions, and the specific conditions and requirements for the Tairāwhiti context will need to be worked out in further detail, on the basis of assessment of whānau needs and preferences as well as provider capabilities and capacities. This will occur during the design and feasibility stages, as we will outline in our devolution roadmap (see section 2.2).

However, it is clear that our new system needs to address historic imbalances. It needs to notice and address whānau need and circumstances holistically. It should also be designed to build whānau trust from its current low levels.

2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

Requirements for devolution to be successful

When devolution works best



Context-specific needs

The needs of people vary at a regional, local, or whānau level



Complexity of needs and delivery

Whānau have multiple and/or complex needs, and delivery is via multiple agencies



System barriers

Whānau face difficulties in navigating the social system due to system barriers and/or low trust in traditional providers



Non-standardised services

There is a need for tailored or personalised services (vertical equity)



Services do not exist yet

The services needed may not yet exist and may need to be co-designed with whānau



Trust

Trust is a pre-condition of intervention effectiveness (for both identifying and addressing needs)

Conditions for successful devolution



Adequate time

Sufficient time for developing long-term trusting relationships with whānau and the broader community



Partner commitment

Shared purpose, principles, and commitment amongst partnering agencies and organisations within the ecosystem, with clarity around roles and responsibilities



Sufficient resourcing

Adequate resourcing in terms of funding, dedicated time, asset bases, capability, and capacity



Devolving power

Sufficient power and decision-making authority devolved, beyond just devolving responsibility



Evaluation

Effective programme monitoring and evaluation (against a purpose-designed framework) with common measures and data, and specific funding ring-fenced for this



Accountability

Appropriate governance mechanisms established, with central government still retaining shared accountability and stewardship, rather than being completely hands-off

Figure 3. Situations when devolution works best (left) and conditions for successful devolution (right).

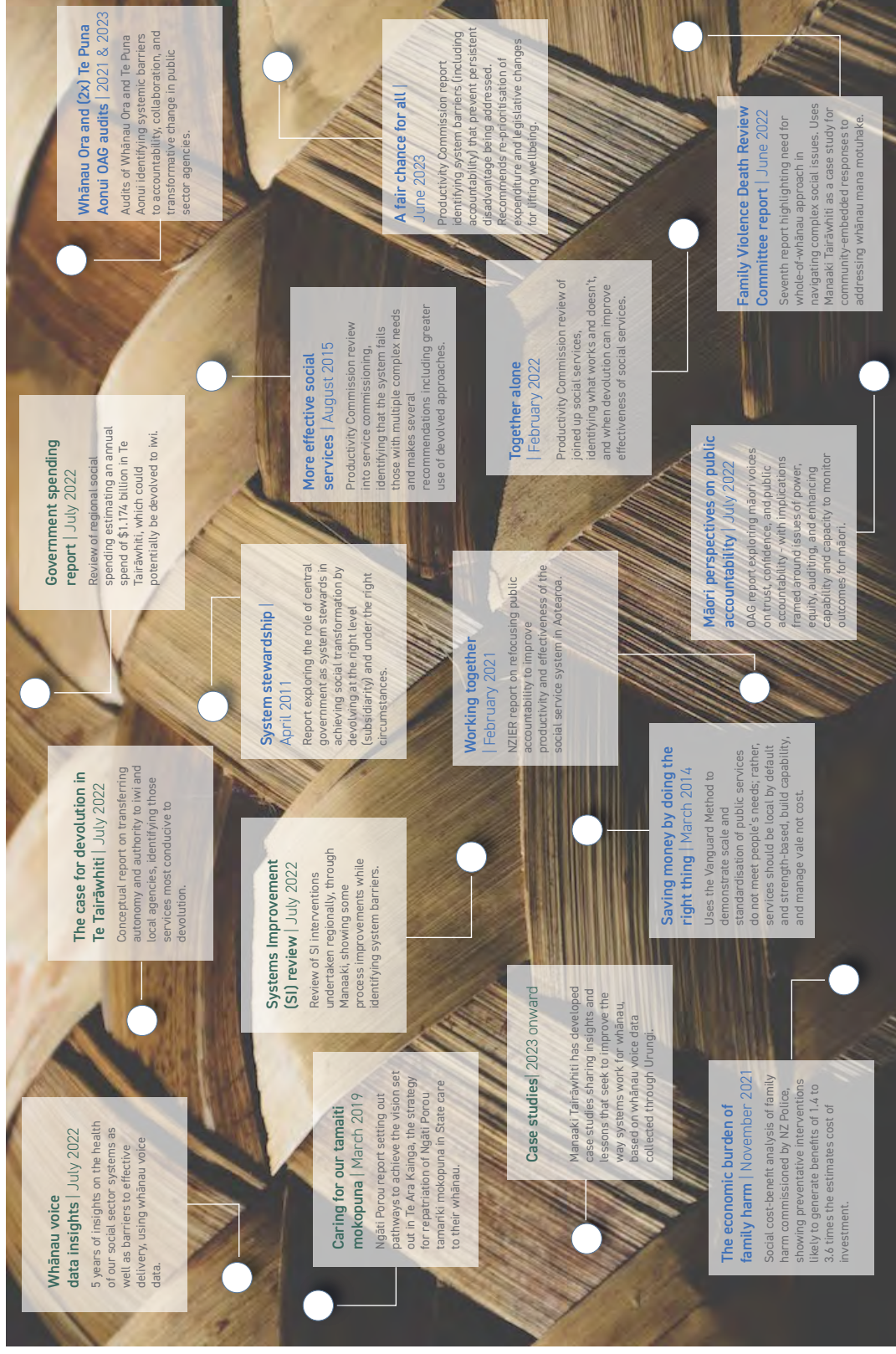
2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

A snapshot of the evidence base driving our roadmap to devolution

Having a robust evidence base is an essential tool in driving change within the social services sector.

The figure at right illustrates the different strands of recent research and reviews that are woven together to build a compelling evidence base. This includes iwi and Manaaki Tairāwhiti's programme of research (indicated in **green**), along with recent relevant research produced by other agencies (in **blue**). Key insights are detailed in section 3.3.

Collectively, these research and insights demonstrate compelling evidence for delivering a better way of enabling whānau to flourish, and supports our case for devolution of specific social services to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti.



Key

Green = iwi and Manaaki Tairāwhiti commissioned research, insights, and evaluations

Blue = relevant research produced by government agencies and independent bodies

Figure 4. Programme of research and reviews (recent) supporting the case for devolution.



2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

Strategic alignment

The idea of devolution is not new. Beginning with Te Puao-te-Ata-tu (The report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori perspective for the Department of Social Welfare) in 1988, successive reviews into social systems have recommended some version of partial or full devolution of services as being a means of improving the way the system functions and delivers on wellbeing outcomes.

More recently, the Productivity Commission review of joined-up social services recommended “fundamentally devolving resourcing and decision rights to support the intent of collaborative initiatives, improve the effectiveness of social services, and ensure systems-level change”³, supported by adequate resourcing, workforce development, and a willingness to learn from both success and failure. Previous Productivity Commission reports have also recommended greater use of devolved approaches.

In their 2017 response, the government agreed to most of these recommendations for greater use of devolution. It was noted that PBIs in particular, will “develop and mature, and could involve devolution of decisions, including about resources”. Support for PBIs to use commissioning models in time was also noted in this response.

While full devolution as a paradigm represents a shift away from the current social services system, the principles behind our proposed approach are still very much in line with current thinking by sector leaders.

In fact, the recently launched plan Social Sector Commissioning: Progress, Principles and Next Steps outlines examples of devolved decision-making and commissioning, such as Whānau Ora commissioning and the devolution to local PBIs such as Manaaki Tairāwhiti.

A key principle of this approach to relational commissioning is iwi rangatiratanga and self-determination in designing our own solutions, and iwi-crown partnerships at the heart of effective commissioning. Importantly, when enacted, these principles may involve devolving commissioning of services to iwi, in line with their interests and where appropriate.

In Social Sector Commissioning: Progress, Principles and Next Steps, the foreword by the Minister (Hon Carmel Sepuloni) acknowledges a firm belief “that local solutions are found within local communities. Our role as government is to support communities to do this”.

Similarly, the outcomes of our proposed devolution are very much in line with the vision set by the Social Wellbeing Agency (and Social Wellbeing Board) that “people, whānau and communities live the life to which they aspire”.

The only difference between the relational commissioning approach and our proposed roadmap is the degree of devolution. We seek to move beyond the constraints of centrally designed contracts to devolved authority and funding for services currently designed and delivered by government agencies.

The figure overleaf visualises how the case for devolution to iwi is aligned with broader government strategic objectives and current thinking in the sector.



2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

Strategic alignment

We illustrate strategic links to sector thinking (government and NGO) in the figure below. We suggest that devolving social services to iwi to improve whānau and regional wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti is a non-partisan issue.

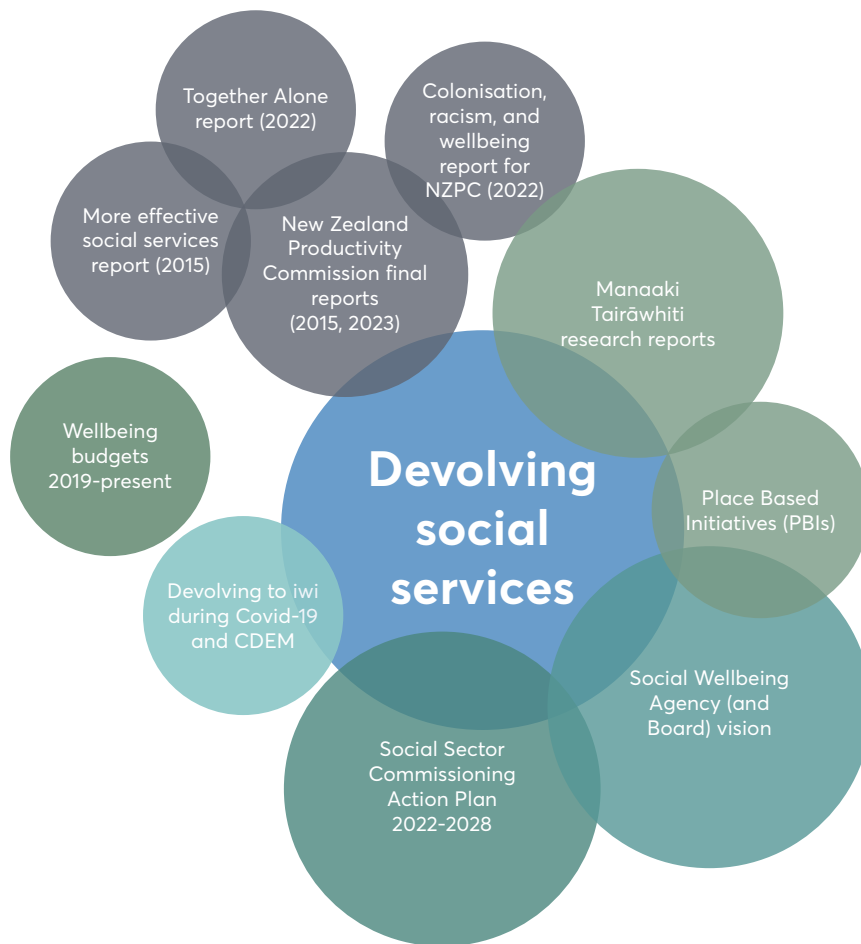


Figure 5. How our roadmap for social service devolution to iwi is strategically aligned at the regional, sector, and national levels

2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

Why Te Tairāwhiti is ideally placed for this

There is a strong case to be made for why Te Tairāwhiti is the ideal test case for social service devolution to iwi. As a region, Te Tairāwhiti meets the generic pre-conditions for successful devolution.

Our rohe also has strong foundations in environmental, economic, and cultural wellbeing. For instance, we have the most te reo māori speakers per capita, and our rohe is rich with cultural expertise in kapa haka, whakairo, ta moko, and waka ama.

Finally, there are also unique characteristics of iwi, Manaaki Tairāwhiti, and the region itself, that make our region ideally placed to serve as a test case for devolving social services in Aotearoa. These are described at right.

Te Tairāwhiti is well-placed to benefit from and drive the devolution of social services, and other aspects that contribute to holistic wellbeing (our environmental, economic and cultural spheres) are also well-aligned regionally.

We understand that the government may not be ready for large-scale devolution across Aotearoa. Te Tairāwhiti is isolated from other regions (physically) and devolving here is a good low-profile way of beginning and testing the process.

» Te Tairāwhiti as a region

1. Te Tairāwhiti has complex needs

There is an urgent need to address the persistent disadvantage that exists within Te Tairāwhiti, along with a broader regional ambition to lift the wellbeing of all whānau in the region. Many whānau in the region experience multiple, complex needs. For some, these needs remain unmet or become exacerbated through the existing social service system, which is inherently complex to navigate.

Further, our community experiences discrimination (gender, age, and ethnicity) at a rate nearly twice the average, which impacts wellbeing and can be a further barrier to receiving assistance.

2. Majority māori

The majority of Te Tairāwhiti's population identify as māori, and as such the region has a strong foundation in kaupapa māori with local iwi affiliations and a substantially higher proficiency in te reo speakers, the majority of which align to their local iwi. There is not a large mataawaka population as in other large urban areas.*

The historic and ongoing impacts of colonisation continue to erode the foundations of wellbeing. Here, māori comprise the vast majority of those in need of appropriate social services and continue to remain poorly serviced by these institutions. This provides an ideal opportunity for the use of holistic whānau-centred models of social services and support, that balance prevention with crisis response.

* Mataawaka refers to māori living in a region who are not affiliated with a mana whenua group

2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

Why Te Tairāwhiti is ideally placed for this

» Regional iwi capability and maturity

1. Iwi connections and capability

Iwi organisations have trusted relationships with the whānau they serve as well as each other, and therefore have the highest level of accountability to our people and place. Iwi leaders have the mana and expertise, and through their collaborative leadership have been able to realise significant benefits for the region (see case studies in section 2.3).

2. Manaaki Tairāwhiti leaders' commitment

Most senior leaders in Manaaki Tairāwhiti live locally, all know each other well, understand the region's needs, and are committed to the collective's purpose for the long-term – in many cases, irrespective of their current roles.

3. Local experience and maturity

Iwi and local leaders are best placed to develop, lead, and deliver locally-tailored, effective, and sustainable solutions. The long-term, trust-based relationships with whānau and the community also best set up interventions for success, shifting away from conventional transactional models of client interaction to assisting in the transformation of whānau lives by enabling them to exercise self-determination. Evaluations of Manaaki Tairāwhiti as a Place-Based Initiative (PBI) have also highlighted the substantial skills-, knowledge-, and evidence-base accumulated within the collective over the years. Iwi and Manaaki Tairāwhiti as a collective have the capability and track-record to deliver regional transformation.

2.1 | The full case for devolution of social services to Te Tairāwhiti

The ideal test case for social service devolution to iwi

For the reasons outlined earlier, we argue that Te Tairāwhiti provides the ideal test case in terms of its demonstrated need; its isolation limiting access to, as well as impact on, other regions; meeting the preconditions for successful devolution, the region's proven track record and maturity, as well as iwi and senior leaders' commitment for the long-term. Our case is visually summarised in the infographic below.

Manaaki Tairāwhiti has endorsed and planned for devolution since its inception in 2016. In the current Strategic Action Plan⁴, Manaaki Tairāwhiti commits to working with and supporting iwi in their search for self-determination (referred to as 'mana motuhake' by iwi):


"Ultimately, we are aiming for social transformation that significantly reduces the need for social services in our region and provides for the fullest expression of autonomy and empowerment for all Tairāwhiti whānau."

Why Tairāwhiti is best suited to test devolution

- 

Context-specific needs
High proportion of population are māori (and likely belong to a local iwi) with deprivation particularly pronounced for māori whānau in the region.
- 

Complexity of needs
Māori disproportionately experience high economic deprivation (77% in the region) which can result in many whānau having multiple and complex needs being unmet, and requiring service delivery across many agencies.
- 

System barriers
Whānau voice insights highlight the numerous barriers encountered by whānau in navigating the existing social systems, as well as in getting their needs met.
- 

Non-standardised services
Due to the complexity of whānau needs (and a focus on response rather than early intervention), our whānau voice and barriers data shows that existing services are not fully or effectively addressing whānau needs.
- 

Services do not yet exist
Whānau needs span multiple domains - and can compound when unmet - meaning whānau require assistance that does not fit within the scope of conventional services.
- 

Trust
Whānau have low trust in the system and with agencies, based on previous bad experiences and/or a history of having their needs unmet.

Conditions for successful devolution that already exist in Tairāwhiti

- 

Adequate time
Iwi in Tairāwhiti have a long history of **self-determination**, and **trusted relationships** with whānau, the community, local leaders, and each other.
- 

Partner commitment
Local agencies and leaders have a history of working collaboratively, are driven by a principled "way of working", tend to live locally, and are **committed** to the region for the long term.
- 

Sufficient resourcing to begin
Existing initiatives are **successful**, and iwi have demonstrated **capability**. Resourcing is needed to scale these initiatives and build capacity.
- 

Devolving power
While devolution of services is already achieving some success, a full devolution of **decision-making and authority** is required, going beyond what is possible with current relational commissioning approaches.
- 

Evaluation
The region has been able to collect **whānau voice insights** as well as systems improvement data, building a **robust evidence base** on what is and isn't working. A fit-for-purpose whānau-centred evaluation framework can be designed out of this.
- 

Accountability
Clear governance and accountability mechanisms can be designed, leveraging the existing structures in place (such as rūnanga). Being mana whenua, iwi and hapū have the **highest level of accountability** to our people and place.

Figure 6. Why Te Tairāwhiti is the ideal strategic fit to serve as a test case for devolution of social services to iwi.

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2.2

Our devolution roadmap



2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Section 2.2 lays out the roadmap for social service devolution to iwi, while emphasising the need for and the benefits of taking this course of action. Our key focus areas and approach to achieving results are also highlighted.

» Overview of our devolution pathway

The stages and decision points in our pathway to social services devolution.

28

> this discussion starts on page 28

» Our ask of the Social Wellbeing Board

Overview of our ask in this document, and beyond.

31

> this discussion starts on page 31

» What we want devolved

A whole-of-system approach, including our four focus areas and desired outcomes, by iwi, for iwi.

33

> this discussion starts on page 33

» Risk and return

A discussion on accountability, risk management, and the potential returns of this approach.

41

> this discussion starts on page 41

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Overview of our roadmap to change

In order to move beyond rhetoric we have proposed a practical roadmap to guide the long term process of devolving social services in Te Tairāwhiti to iwi. We seek the Social Wellbeing Board's agreement and support for this roadmap. We will also be seeking ministerial and cabinet support for our proposed path to devolution in Te Tairāwhiti.

We recognise that the exact nature of full devolution may be hard to define and commit to at these early stages. As a result, we are keen to establish commitment to the general vision, principles, and early steps rather than the details of the final steps.

Our path is informed by a robust research and evidence base, and builds on the foundations of a demonstrated track record by iwi social service provision in the rohe. It involves the following stages, with decision points emphasised in bold:

Stage One

The first stage involves several phases including conceptual planning, feasibility studies design, and starting devolution in four focus areas.

» **Devolution roadmap**
This phase requires an **in-principle agreement** to our conceptual social services devolution roadmap by the Social Wellbeing Board, as well as a **commitment** to the concepts, staging, and principles outlined. This is **decision point 1**.

» Co-design process

The desired future state for social services devolution and priority focus areas are identified and co-designed with us as iwi, driven by our aspirations. As part of developing this roadmap document, the co-design process is already underway. However, it is an iterative process and will continue to be refined along the way, following the feasibility studies and lessons learned from Phase One devolution and the implementation of the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board. **Decision point 2** here requires agreement and commitment to fund (\$1.12 - \$1.52M) and proceed with the feasibility studies (next phase).

» Feasibility studies for the four focus areas

Feasibility studies will be undertaken for four focus areas: child wellbeing, Whānau Ora services, housing, and establishing the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board. This requires funding and support from government. The studies will involve detailed planning of the operating model(s); funding and resourcing requirements; and the commercial, contracting, and governance structures. Approaches to monitoring, accountability, and evaluation will also be finalised in this phase. **Decision point 3** requires agreement to fund and proceed with devolution (Phase One) across the four areas, including contracts for the next two phases (below) being implemented in parallel.

» Phase One devolution

In parallel to the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board being established, devolution is launched on a smaller scale in three other key focus areas (tamariki wellbeing, Whānau Ora, and housing) that are already current initiatives and programmes of work. Initially these services will be for māori, although iwi can decide if and when services extend to non-māori in the region down the track. The starting of this work will entail an estimated \$50 million in funding, alongside the necessary resourcing and workforce development for iwi providers.

» Establishing the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board

A board comprising iwi and local senior leaders of social services agencies will be established, known as the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board, with an estimated budget of \$100 million.

The necessary authority, decision-making power, and resources for selected social services will be devolved to this board to support decision-making in government agencies and local commissioning of services to iwi providers, while our capabilities and capacities are grown over a pre-determined time. The Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board will be in operation until the end of Stage Two.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Overview of our roadmap to change

Stage Two

The second stage is the implementation programme. Drawing on lessons learned, a detailed implementation plan is developed for the wider devolution of the three services areas (tamariki wellbeing, Whānau Ora, and housing) to iwi. Alongside this, other priority areas (between 5-6) are identified and brought into the process, while the continues to operate. During this stage, all other social services not devolved or under the leadership of the will continue to be provided through central government (either directly or contracted). **Decision point 4** will require an agreement to fund the expansion of the first three focus areas, as well as funding additional priority areas.

» Implementation programme

Drawing on the lessons learned, a detailed implementation plan is developed for the wider scale devolution programme. **Agreement** from central government will be sought at this point to enable full long-term social service devolution to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti going forward.

Stage Three

Stage three is a continuation of the implementation programme, and, by this stage, we anticipate the will be disestablished as iwi capability, capacity, and resourcing will be fully in place. Alternative iwi-led mechanisms for governance and accountability will have also been developed and in operation by this point. Expansion of devolved areas will continue, with large-scale payment processes being established. This will also see a reduction in central provision of social services within Te Tairāwhiti. The agreement to establish funding mechanisms and disestablish the will occur at **decision point 5**. Devolution in other areas may commence here.

Stage Four

The exact nature of full devolution of most social services (including for non-māori) to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti is difficult to determine at this stage. This is a journey of discovery and partnership. The future will become clearer as we work and develop this concept together. Lessons learned throughout the process will be promulgated more widely to inform place-based and other devolution initiatives across Aotearoa.



2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Overview of our pathway to change

The figure below provides an overview of our proposed pathway for social services devolution to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti.

PATHWAY TO DEVOLUTION

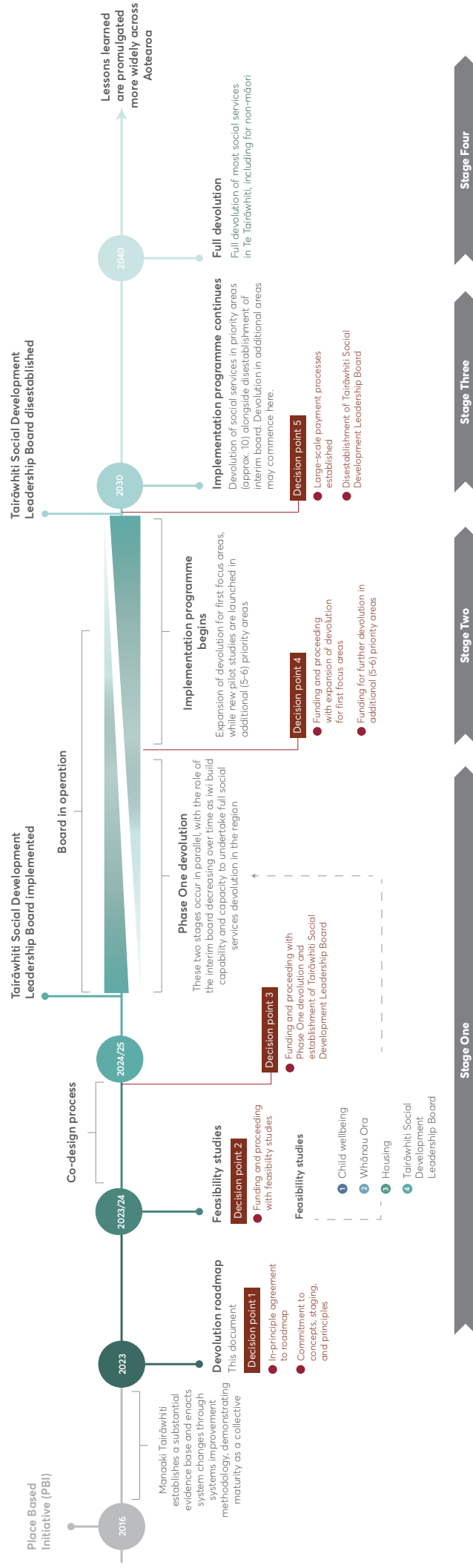


Figure 7. Our pathway to devolution in Te Tairāwhiti indicating decision points for the Social Wellbeing Board, rūnanga and iwi boards, and Manaaki Tairāwhiti board at each stage.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Our ask of the Social Wellbeing Board

Our call for devolution to iwi may seem a radical one, but in practice in its early stage it is simply a more effective and streamlined approach to the contracting, scaling, and resourcing of existing initiatives and services – such as Whānau Ora and the Toitū Tairāwhiti housing initiatives which have already demonstrated success in the region.

Our vision for social services devolution to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti is aimed at regional transformation. This requires the transfer of both resources (financial, social, and cultural) and decision rights, commensurate with these bold goals. The Waitangi Tribunal report Hauora⁵ emphasises that:

"if [the crown] is going to delegate significant responsibilities to Māori-controlled bodies, it must provide them with enough resources to ensure that they do not fail, and are able to discharge those responsibilities in a way that benefits the whānau, hapū, and iwi they serve".

To not do anything, to not disrupt the cycle of persistent disadvantage results in a cost that Aotearoa cannot afford socially or economically. It can no longer be who we are as a nation.

We are asking the Social Wellbeing Board to be bold. To take a calculated and evidence-substantiated risk. And to pave the path for a new Aotearoa – one that accounts for the wellbeing of all its people. In particular, we are seeking the Board's commitment to:

- Substantial transformation in the regional model for social assistance, not just change at the boundaries;
- Our devolution pathway and the principles (By iwi, for iwi and being whānau-centred) underpinning this pathway;

- Comprehensive funding – the precise quantum is to be identified in the feasibility studies, but it needs to be a serious portion of the \$1.17 billion of the estimated current regional spend (see section 3.3);
- A long period of time while capability and capacity is developed, and so that there is sufficient time for iwi to demonstrate the success of these initiatives;
- A different model of partnership that relinquishes increasingly greater control and power to iwi over time;
- Delegating authority but not all accountability to the region; and
- Preparedness to absorb political uncertainty as part of the process.

As a region, we believe we have earned a level of trust as demonstrated through the case studies (section 2.3) and our evidence base (section 3.3) that show iwi maturity, capability, and track record in delivering social assistance to improve whānau lives in Te Tairāwhiti. This will form the basis of a good faith partnership in working with central government and its agencies.

The total investment required will be finalised in the feasibility studies. Separately, funding for baseline benchmarking, monitoring, and evaluation will need to be ring-fenced, in order to demonstrate accountability (discussed later in this section).

The importance of government leaders championing this work cannot be understated, in terms of effecting change within the wider social service ecosystem. We see the Social Wellbeing Board who have close and intimate familiarity with the efforts to date, being well-positioned to advocate for a bold, transformative, and much-needed change.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Our ask of the Social Wellbeing Board

We are seeking an in-principle agreement and commitment by the government, through the Social Wellbeing Board, to undertaking this devolution journey with us. The present roadmap document is simply the first step.

Specifically, we are asking that the Social Wellbeing Board:

1. **Agree** in-principle our path to devolution, as outlined in this document
2. **Agree** a commitment to the concepts, staging, and principles outlined here, through a partnership model with iwi.

This will be followed by a business case for the feasibility studies later in 2023, likely requiring an investment of between \$1.12 million and \$1.52 million, for approval by the Social Wellbeing Board, the Rūnanga and iwi boards, and the Manaaki Tairāwhiti board.

Being brave can sound like a difficult thing to do. But I look back on the history of our people, and particularly since 1840, and if there's anything that has marked the survival and the flourishing of our people, it's that we have been brave

– Dr Moana Jackson

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Whole of system devolution

Our proposed pathway to devolution entails a fundamental paradigm shift in the social services model. Rather than contracting we are asking for a change in the whole system.

Within the context of social services, a devolved system comprises:

- An **operating framework** including a strategy as well as broader regulations, policies, and standards that are relevant;
- The **people**, including the leadership and the workforce, as well as the collective knowledge, skills, thinking (i.e., policy-making and innovation) and capabilities;
- **Institutional processes**, procedures, practices, and ways of working;
- The collection, analysis, usage, and sharing of **data**, while maintaining our sovereignty over information about us, which may be linked to performance and accountability metrics;
- **Resourcing and financing** including a dedicated budget sufficient to cover assets, service provision and workforce development, as well as decision-rights over use of this budget;
- Delegation and **decision-making authority**, including contracting mechanisms;
- **Relationships** with other agencies and users/clients, as well as rules around these interactions;
- **Provision of services** itself, which are traditionally the delivery 'outputs'; and
- **Accountability** mechanisms, including **governance arrangements** and approaches to risk management.

Systems are also inherently underpinned by **power**. Currently in the social service system this power resides with the government, with certain decision-making authority and delegations (usually underpinned by legislation) occasionally contracted out to other agencies and organisations (see section 3.1 for an overview of centralised versus devolved social system approaches).

We want to examine and encompass all of these components and mechanisms into the design of the feasibility studies and subsequent devolved areas of operation.

We do not want to receive a broken system. Without a fundamental change to the paradigm, we are being set up for failure.

In our case for devolution of social services to iwi, we are, therefore, seeking funding for all of the components outlined at left; that is, all of the components required to establish a new social system in Te Tairāwhiti – not just funding for front-facing service delivery.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Overview of our focus areas

As a risk mitigation strategy and in order to gain rich learning, we propose to build on current initiatives which also have a degree of difference from each other.

There are a range of initiatives in Te Tairāwhiti where good work is being done to integrate approaches and improve outcomes. Substantial benefit can be achieved from scaling up delivery, improving integration between regional and national resources, and collaboratively refining initiatives.

The diagram below shows an overview of our four priority areas where existing programmes can be enhanced. These are then detailed on subsequent pages.

Initiatives in these four areas will achieve a step-change in how services are delivered at the regional level and experienced by whānau, whilst building from programmes with a proven track record, delivered by organisations with existing capability. Implementation planning for each of these focus areas – including the staging of each – will occur during the feasibility studies stage, and be finalised as part of Phase One devolution.

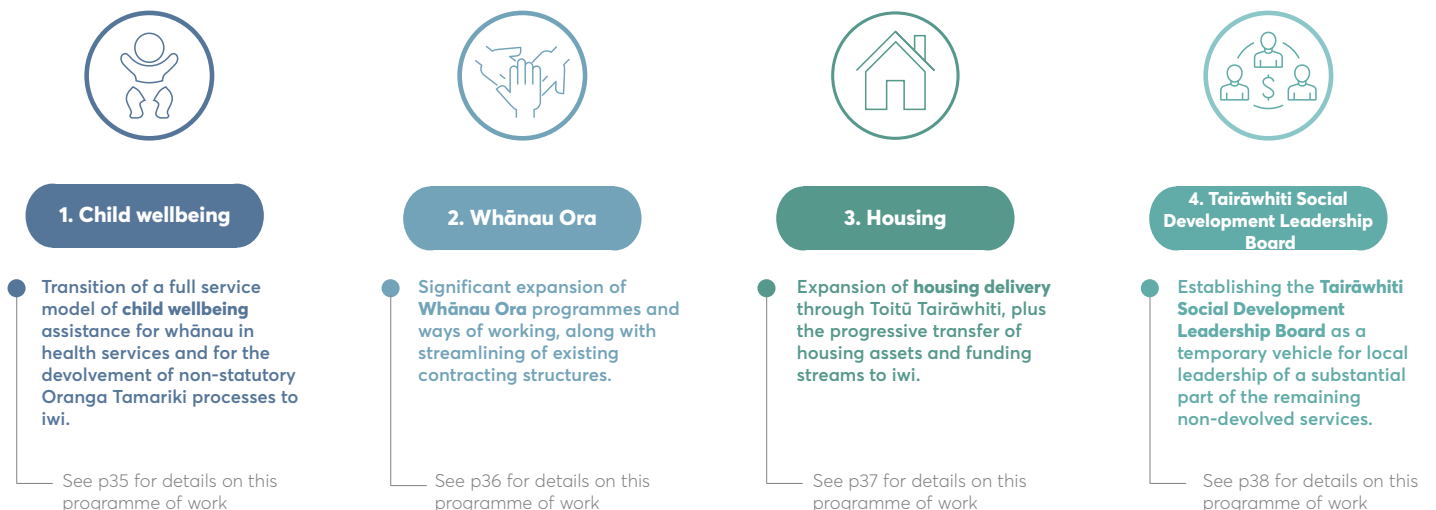


Figure 8. Our focus areas, based on improving and scaling existing initiatives.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Focus area 1: Tamariki wellbeing

The wellbeing of tamariki through to rangatahi remains the most important priority for us. Of particular concern are the crucial shortfalls and deficiencies of state care for tamariki māori.

Most tamariki in state care within Te Tairāwhiti are affiliated with Ngāti Porou. Iwi have been working in this space to stop the flow of tamariki mokopuna into state care, beginning with Te Ara Kainga in 1987, and more recently setting out a plan of action in a 2019 report *Caring for our Tamaiti Mokopuna*⁶. The vision is to have no more tamariki enter state care, and for the repatriation of those already in state care into whānau and hapū care.

While Ngāti Porou has made considerable progress toward this goal, achieving this vision for local iwi will require whānau-centred, early intervention that provides support for life, not

just during crises or difficult times. Moreover, the context within which this assistance is delivered is important, especially in highly vulnerable situations such as with the custody of tamariki mokopuna.

The transition to a full service model of child wellbeing assistance in our roadmap will require the devolution of all government-run programmes of child wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti, including health and non-statutory Oranga Tamariki functions, to be managed using a by iwi, for iwi model.

Child wellbeing is inherently connected to many other whānau needs, and tamariki are often the main reason that whānau seek assistance. In order to support the mauri ora of tamariki mokopuna and whānau hapū, any related economic and social issues such as housing, income, and health issues also need to be addressed.

This is why a whole-of-system, whānau-centred and generational approach is critical to our case for devolution. Such issues operate at the boundaries of where relational commissioning can effect change, because contracts are still short-term, for specific services, and fragmented in their funding and administrative requirements.



Child wellbeing



This is relatively complex to achieve.

We anticipate the feasibility study for this programme of work will be in the range of **\$450,000 to \$600,000**.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Focus area 2: Whānau Ora

Another focus area is the scaling of successful Whānau Ora programmes to assist many more whānau in Te Tairāwhiti. Currently, around two-thirds of the region (33, 000) live in areas of high deprivation; 77% (25,410) of whom are māori.

Existing Whānau Ora programmes – delivered through commissioned iwi and community providers – in the region, while successful, are limited in their capacity to assist more whānau. Resultantly, many whānau are falling through the cracks in the system with their needs remaining unmet.

The vision here is to scale existing Whānau Ora programmes and principles across the sector – with a \$10 million resource uplift – while also simplifying the integrated contracting model and structures.

We will also seek to integrate the Whānau Ora values and way of working across all of the devolved initiatives. We however seek comprehensive, long term and systemic changes in delivery, qualities which the 2028 independent review and the 2023 Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) audit found missing in the current commissioning model.

While the ultimate goal is to increase the provision of assistance to many more whānau in the region, there are also parallel benefits of:

- Being able to collect and control data at a local level, including considerations of data sovereignty;
- Changing accountability mechanisms, through changing contracting structures, so that the accountability is ultimately to whānau, rather than the government;
- Hearing and responding to whānau voice; and
- Clearer intervention pathways (for benefits and assistance) that remove whakamā (shame), and instead uphold the mana of whānau.



Whānau Ora



This is relatively simple to achieve.

We anticipate the feasibility study for this programme of work will be in the range of **\$110,000 to \$160,000**.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Focus area 3: Housing

Our third focus area is the delivery of housing, with the aim of expanding existing initiatives that are delivering successful housing outcomes. In particular, the focus is on scaling up Toitū Tairāwhiti housing – the leadership collective representing the four iwi in the region.

Toitū Tairāwhiti already have a key role in the region's Housing Strategy⁷, to ensure all whānau have safe, healthy, and affordable homes across the whole housing continuum. Housing options range from full homes to cabins and relocatable homes, as well as retrofitting and repairing existing homes.

Through three housing initiatives, the collective has progressed the building of around 150 new homes in the region, and has plans for at least another 300 homes over the next decade.

Scaling iwi-led regional housing will require:

- The progressive transfer of management of tenancies, assets and ownership of existing Kāinga Ora housing assets, to ensure whānau can readily and easily access housing options that meets their needs;
- That iwi receives adequate funding streams so that the operating components required for scaling of services can be achieved; and
- Under a fully devolved model, the approach to tenancy management will be integrated with Whānau Ora programmes outlined on the previous page.



Housing

This is relatively complex in parts.

We anticipate the feasibility study for this programme of work will be in the range of **\$110,000 to \$160,000**.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Focus area 4: Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board

The final priority area is the creation of the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board as a vehicle for local leadership of a significant portion of the remaining non-devolved government social services. The purpose of this board will be for public sector leaders in our region to work together with iwi and others in making collective decisions on social development spending locally.

This step occurs in parallel with the other focus areas, while the resourcing, capabilities, and capacity of iwi agencies are being grown. We envision this as an interim role, with the board function decreasing over time as iwi develop sufficient capability and capacity to undertake full devolution of specified social services in the region. The Manaaki Tairāwhiti board members from agencies tell us that there is often a tension between their desire to work collectively and be driven by local needs and central agency policies.

Establishing the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board will require devolving a high level of both the authority and resources for the group to make impactful local decisions. It will also require a means of unlinking the regional social service leaders from the constraints of national policy settings and accountabilities, such as the Public Finance Act 1989. This is not just the commissioning of contracts.

As such, we are talking about a fundamental paradigm shift – and it is crucial that the board is appropriately resourced to set this shift up, so that as devolution of more services happen we are not handing over a broken system to iwi, expecting us to resolve decades of built-in issues.

We envision the Manaaki Tairāwhiti governance group with strengthened iwi leadership stepping into this interim role, as the regional collective for social wellbeing. Being an iwi-led PBI, Manaaki’s governance and leadership are crucial elements of the collective’s success.

Manaaki focuses on effecting larger-scale change in social sector provision, with devolution to iwi being an integral part of this vision. Details on Manaaki’s governance and programmes of work are explored further in section 2.3; presenting a compelling rationale for this collective to be repurposed as the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board, as part of Te Tairāwhiti’s devolution roadmap.



Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board

This is very complex.

We anticipate the feasibility study for this programme of work will be in the range of \$450,000 to \$600,000.



Image: Manaaki Tairāwhiti governance group
Credit: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Desired future state

We are committed to assisting and supporting whānau to realise their hopes and ambitions, while upholding their mana and rangatiratanga. This includes promoting and advancing the cultural, economic, social, and spiritual wellbeing of whānau across the rohe.

In essence, this means:

- **Breaking the (intergenerational) cycles of crisis** through early response, prevention, and wrap-around support for family violence, addictions, and other health issues;
- **Increasing independence** through strength-based approaches that assist whānau to achieve self-determination; and
- **Moving toward mauri ora** where whānau not only have their basic needs met (e.g., housing, safety, employment) but are able to meet their own aspirations and lead fulfilling lives, in line with what it is they value.

Improved wellbeing of our people through self-determination is the vision, and devolution is the path that gets us there. Our vision for this desired future state is shown below.



Figure 9. Desired future state for whānau, hapū, and iwi in Te Tairāwhiti.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

How we achieve results

Our approach to devolution takes a whānau-centred approach, with a focus on the whole whānau – rather than individual client divorced from the whānau context – wellbeing. It enables whānau and the community to identify what is needed to improve their lives and wellbeing. It also empowers kaimahi to deliver tailored solutions and do *whatever it takes* to meet whānau needs, unconstrained by contract limitations, and within the context of trusted, long-term relationships.

The resultant model will involve an initial mix of devolved and centrally-designed services (which devolve also over time), depending on whānau needs and preferences as well as the capability and capacity of local providers. The mix of services, specific financial and operating models, as well as the resourcing requirements will be co-designed by iwi and agencies.

In essence, we are taking a by iwi, for iwi approach to devolution, as illustrated in the sidebar at right.

By iwi, for iwi

Socioeconomic and health outcomes for māori have traditionally been framed from a disadvantage or deficit perspective. This focuses on responding to problems or crises and individualises what is essentially a longstanding system failure to recognise, and properly give effect to, māori tino rangatiratanga.

Simply responding to immediate needs can perpetuate the cycle of welfare dependency. In contrast, strengths-based approaches focus on more holistic ways of promoting, protecting, and maintaining wellbeing through building self-determination and capability for whānau. The focus is therefore on meeting whānau where they are, building on their strengths, and helping whānau to help themselves in the long term.

Specifically, we refer here to strengths-based approaches grounded in te ao māori, that is **by iwi, for iwi** – both in terms of the design and delivery of social assistance programmes.

We use the term iwi throughout this report, recognising that self-determination and tino rangatiratanga applies to any configuration that māori choose to organise in – whānau, hapū, iwi, or other.

A **by iwi, for iwi** approach is also consistent with the Waitangi Tribunal's proposed principles for crown Tiriti partnerships. It gives effect to the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi by:

- Recognising and upholding tino rangatiratanga of māori to exercise autonomy and self-determination, in particular to engineer their own solutions to social issues;
- Seeking to deliver on equitable outcomes for māori – through the provision of tailored needs-based services; and
- Facilitating iwi decision-making at all levels from service design and delivery to governance. Here, whānau also have a say in the assistance they need and receive.

To ensure such an approach is truly viable in shifting the dial on outcomes, this requires Tiriti partners to act in good faith. It also requires that comprehensive kaupapa māori services to be supported through adequate funding and resourcing to ensure they do not fail and they can deliver on intended benefits to improving whānau wellbeing.

Although a **by iwi, for iwi** approach ensures that iwi are accountable to their members, this does not absolve the crown of its own Tiriti responsibilities in the area of ōritetanga (see discussion on accountability overleaf). Instead, the government needs to equally be accountable for its actions in relation to māori.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

On accountability

Accountability will be important for this devolution process. The accountability framework will need to be co-designed and meet our mutual needs. It will need to recognise the importance of trust based relationships between us and the public service, be equitable in the way in which measurements of success are applied to both the devolved services and the counterfactual of the systems which remain in public service hands. Accountability is more than just fiscal accountability. It must have a focus on outcomes for whānau and include whānau in not just the measurement of success, but the definitions of success. Accountability must be non-hierarchical and rather between all the relationships; horizontally, peer to peer, from the whānau upwards to iwi and agencies and from the public sector leadership to iwi as much as from iwi to the public sector.

Current systems are predicated on the power inequity where the public sector often designs the programmes, usually defines the outcomes and always implements the measurement of success. This has often led to not only a lack of recognition of what whānau māori desire, it can also ignore when those whānau have a sense of success.

A 2023 NZIER report⁸ for the Fair Chance for All inquiry by the Productivity Commission identifies three dimensions of accountability:

- 1. Democratic** – ensures that individuals and organisations are held accountable for their actions and do not avoid responsibility for negative outcomes;
- 2. Constitutional** – prevents abuse of authority, and is focused on probity (particularly fiscal probity), transparency, and ethical behaviour; and
- 3. Learning** – focuses on delivery of commitments through ongoing learning and improvement via feedback loops, including whānau voice.

We believe that fiscal probity has been elevated at the expense of the two other aspects. There are currently no real consequences for the crown failing to meet their obligations, to iwi through Te Tiriti and to whānau for the service promise which social development programmes are predicated on. While electoral consequences may happen the ‘problems’ the public may see as failure are often over simplified, politicised and frequently not based on evidence.

Ultimately there is an underlying fiscal failure too, when billions of dollars of social development support do not deliver the desired outcomes and traps individuals, whānau and whole māori communities in persistent disadvantage. Nor is there evidence of ongoing learnings and improvements to current systems and ways of doing despite recommendations from the OAG, the Productivity Commission, the Children’s Commissioner and the Chief Ombudsman (see bibliography).

A pre-occupation with probity and reporting can create a false sense of being ‘accountable’, without actually delivering on any meaningful change or demonstrating effectiveness of spending. The current approach to accountability – i.e., a heavy focus on the constitutional dimension, which typically includes formalised ‘safeguards’ for expenditure of public funds – creates a focus on rigid contracts, burdensome reporting and accounting for outputs rather than outcomes.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

On accountability

The devolution of social services to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti is an opportunity to also trial new frameworks of accountability. One which has whānau outcomes at its centre, is strength based, shares power and is equitable.

Such an approach would focus on:

- Improving whānau lives based on whānau voice and grounded in what whānau value, using a test-learn-adapt model that is focused on accountability to whānau
- The creation of trust between us as parties to this transformative process. Trust will need to be earned through action and demonstrated by all of us throughout the life of this programme of work.
- Ensuring leadership and commitment at the highest levels of the public sector and with a joined up approach which recognises the interplay of the whole ecosystem of social support (rather than, for example, separating out health outcomes from housing impacts or corrections outcomes from the entire justice ecosystem) and the individual accountabilities that cause challenges to changing the way of working.
- Understanding and committing to the concept that the public service leadership of the devolution process is equally accountable for the outcomes of this process (ōritetanga), as we are as iwi and regional leaders.
- Understanding that collaboration comes with uncertainty, that there may be failures but these are lessons to be learned from in a long term commitment to change.
- Measuring the success of mainstream non devolved programmes at the same time and with the same methodology as the devolved programmes so that accountability is equitable
- Ensuring that the frameworks are designed with māori cultural capability on both sides of the agreement and measurement processes. (It is not enough for us to design outcome measures and processes which are then assessed by public sector staff without the cultural capability to understand the tasks at hand.)
- Ensuring that iwi and whānau data sovereignty is given primacy and understanding that qualitative is perhaps even more important than quantitative measures given the variation of human experience and the need for responses to meet the needs of each individual whānau member
- Providing good value for money and ensuring services are effective, with the recognition that whānau seeking more support may be a sign of success as whānau choose to engage more based on trusted relationships with providers.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

Outcome risks

The risks for the proposed devolution of social services have been assessed using a bow-tie analysis, as shown in the diagram below.

On the left of the diagram are the risks that could cause the ultimate goal – full devolution of social services to iwi – to not be achieved. These risks are managed by preventing the risk from occurring, or minimising its severity. These risks will be managed through risk registers for each stage of the proposed devolution.

On the right are the consequences of the risks on the left not being managed. The result will be substandard outcomes to whānau

and regional wellbeing, which can result in significant financial and reputational impacts.

In the event the risks on the left hand side of the diagram are not managed well, corrective actions will be required to avoid the risks on the right hand side eventuating. As is clear from risk management methodologies, the effort and cost of preventative action is generally significantly less than the effort and cost of corrective action.

A discussion on risk mitigation and management is detailed on the following page, along the potential returns from this investment.

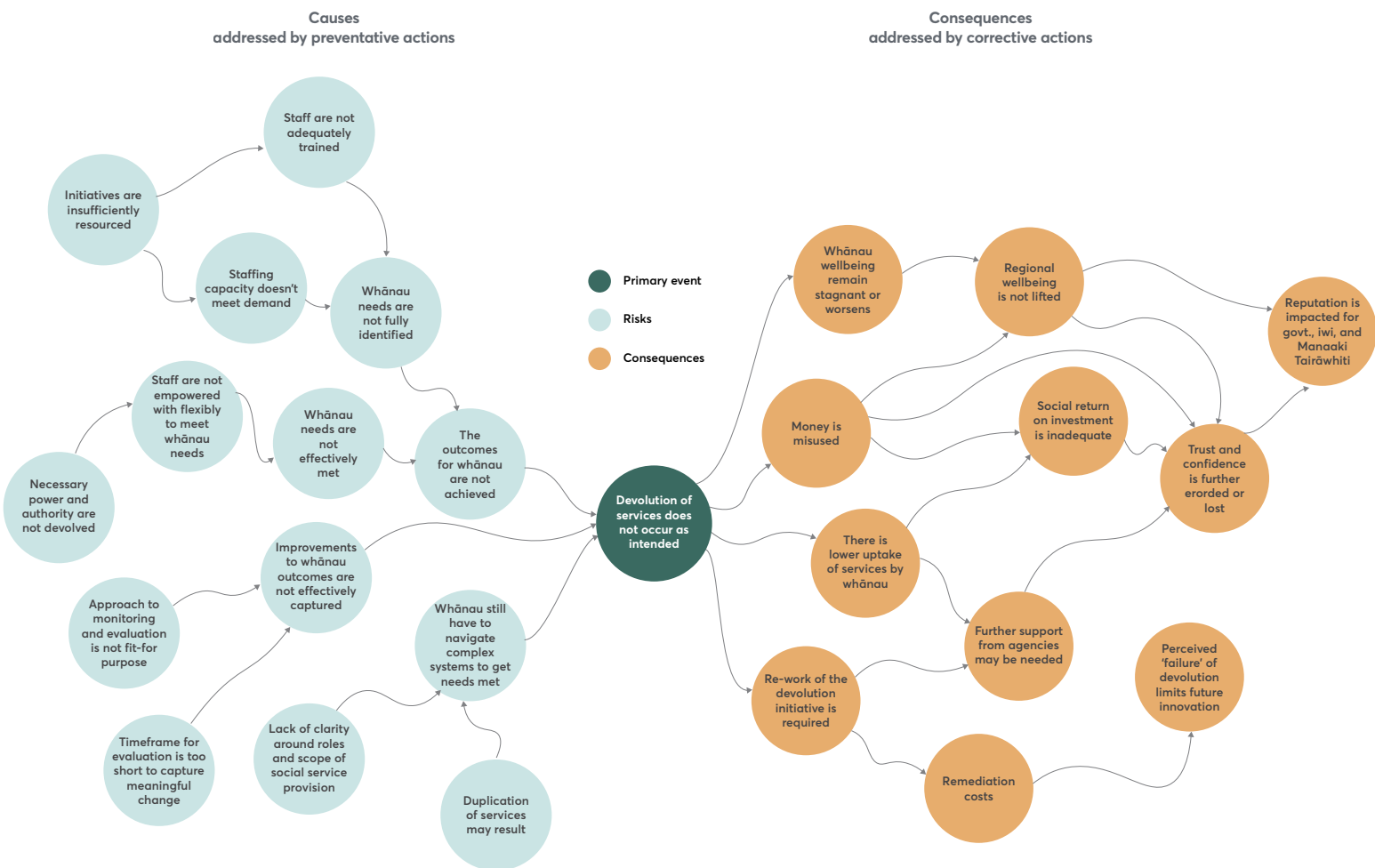


Figure 10. Risk bowtie showing key outcome risks for the programme of social service devolution to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

On risk and return

We understand and are committed to managing risk for ourselves and for the government in this process. This will require producing a detailed co-design of the programme of change, and collecting and integrating evidence, insights, and evaluations throughout a managed transition process.

The transition to full devolution to iwi will be instigated through the progressive transfer of delegation and authority. It will take place alongside the creation of the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board made up of iwi and local senior leaders of social services agencies (this could work as the Manaaki Tairāwhiti board repurposed). Both parts will require sufficient resourcing and delegation power to ensure that the required components of a new social system (see p33) are set up, so that iwi are not being handed over a broken system or part of a system controlled by a larger ecosystem.

Services would transition from management by the Tairāwhiti Social Development Leadership Board to full devolution to iwi delivery, as iwi capabilities and capacities are grown over a pre-determined time.

Since we are talking about a paradigm shift in social service systems, there will of course be some level of residual risk for the government. However, these need to be considered alongside the following unique features at play here:

1. There is demonstrated capability and maturity in the region through iwi-led self-determination interventions and service provision, grounded in a robust evidence base⁹.
2. There is a relatively small population in

Te Tairāwhiti, although whānau tend to have complex and unmet needs.

3. Te Tairāwhiti is geographically isolated and self-contained, meaning any risks and potential failures can be easily contained.
4. Iwi and community leaders are committed to the region for the long-haul, with demonstrated accountability mechanisms already built into existing ways of working.
5. Iwi are in the unique position of being able to hear and respond to whānau voice within their capacity. Devolution expands this capability skill set into a true crown-iwi partnership.

These factors uniquely position Te Tairāwhiti as an 'early adopter' site to test the staged, risk-managed, comprehensive devolution of social services to iwi.

We also need to look at the major risk for iwi – that the co-design and devolution process becomes tokenistic whilst continuing to uphold the existing processes, policies, and power relations of the current system. Handing over services, without the transfer of assets, power, and resources (such as infrastructure and training support) will jeopardise the success of this initiative, and there is a risk to all of our reputations if we fail.

Indeed, a key finding of the Waitangi Tribunal's Hauora report is that māori providers are consistently underfunded whilst also experiencing a disproportionate level of scrutiny compared to non-māori services. This underfunding has been estimated at between \$394 million to \$531 million since 2003, resulting in an estimated cost of \$5 billion per year in health inequities. These concerns will be central to the co-design process and feasibility studies.

2.2 | Our devolution roadmap

On risk and return

Any discussion of risk also has to assess the counterfactual; in this case, can we do worse than the existing system, which has been shown as failing vulnerable groups and māori in particular, time and time again. This has been illustrated most recently in the Productivity Commission report¹⁰ which identifies the "neglect of Te Tiriti as a founding constitutional document" in Aotearoa as a critical gap in our accountability system. In a similar vein, the Hauora report¹¹ points to the crown breaching the articles of Te Tiriti, which has resulted in long-standing inequities for māori.

We also acknowledge that the costs associated with this failure are not currently being accounted for, nor do existing accountability mechanisms serve to hold the crown responsible for these failings. Indeed, conventional services are not always subject to scrutiny and ineffective services are rarely adapted or stopped.

Even where cross-agency arrangements are underway, such as the Joint Venture (Te Puna Aonui) delivering Te Aorerekura - the National Strategy for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, government agencies are still largely limited in their ability to innovate and collaborate effectively¹². This results

in inconsistent ownership, responsibility, and accountability for the joint venture's work.

The longer we wait to act, the more existing inequities become entrenched for current and future generations. Our path to devolution offers a means of creating regional transformation in wellbeing within one generation. Therefore, there is a bigger risk in continuing the status quo. The only moral, logical, and legal choice is to test the alternative approach of devolution to iwi. From a legal perspective, it is also the only option that fully gives effect to iwi partnerships with government under Te Tiriti, as we will show in section 3.1.

Ultimately, there are real and perceived risks with any major social change. However, as noted in the NZIER report on public accountability¹³:

"the question is not whether [alternative approaches] are perfect but whether they are better than a system that is failing. Put another way, do we continue with a system that is not working or try one that might?"

We are therefore committed to working with the government to develop a risk mitigation approach and fit-for-purpose accountability mechanisms.

» The importance of acting now

We have overwhelming evidence of existing systems failing our whānau (see for example, section 3.2). What's more, the impacts of recent adverse weather events have been extensive and catastrophic. This is likely to increase in frequency and magnitude in the future, creating further challenges for our most vulnerable whānau and increasing pressure on social services in the region.

Our region needs new ways of building back. We need to act now and build on the momentum developed through regional leadership, in order to create truly transformative change within one generation.

Instead of continuing with the status quo, now is the time to test the alternative approach of devolving social services to iwi. Not doing so now remains the bigger risk for intergenerational and regional wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti.

We are aware of the inherent risks involved in shifting to an alternative social service approach, and have plans for managing these. We know there is broad cross-party support for the devolution of services to iwi. We know we need to act. Now is the time.

An overriding message repeatedly emphasised across the substantial evidence base is that we cannot continue using the same approaches and expect the outcomes to be different.

– Boulton et al. (2020)



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2.3

Evidence of capability



In this section we showcase a number of case studies of tino rangatiratanga in Te Tairāwhiti, during business as usual as well as in times of crisis, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic. These case studies demonstrate iwi capability and successful track record in improving wellbeing outcomes in the region; often when existing systems fail to respond.

» **By iwi, for iwi initiatives**

Social, health, justice, and education initiatives designed and led by iwi in the region.

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> this discussion starts on page 49

» **Iwi response during Covid-19**

Iwi and hapū's central role in health interventions during and after the pandemic.

58

> this discussion starts on page 58

» **Manaaki Tairāwhiti**

The PBI's way of working and critical success factors in improving whānau wellbeing.

60

> this discussion starts on page 60

2.3 | By iwi, for iwi initiatives

Self-determination is an evidenced pathway to improved social outcomes

Within te ao māori, wellbeing is understood from a collective perspective. Here, tino rangatiratanga – of whānau, hapū, and iwi – is the pathway to wellbeing. Equally, a certain level of wellbeing is required to enact tino rangatiratanga. Wellbeing and tino rangatiratanga are therefore reciprocally linked.

Iwi self-determination is an "evidenced" pathway to improving social outcomes. Specifically, McMeeking and colleagues¹⁴ note that self-determination is:

"the enactment of inherited responsibilities to communities within the context of the colonial legacy necessitating that communities are self-reliant and resilient in the face of government unwillingness or inability to respond to community needs."

We have a long history of enacting tino rangatiratanga – during ordinary times and at times of crises. Within Te Tairāwhiti, there are many examples of iwi and hapū-led initiatives that are grounded in kaupapa māori and have demonstrated benefits not just for māori, but for the entire community. This section showcases a selection of these by iwi, for iwi initiatives, represented in the infographic below.

We have not included any 2023 cyclone and post-cyclone management case studies as it is too early to assess and describe.

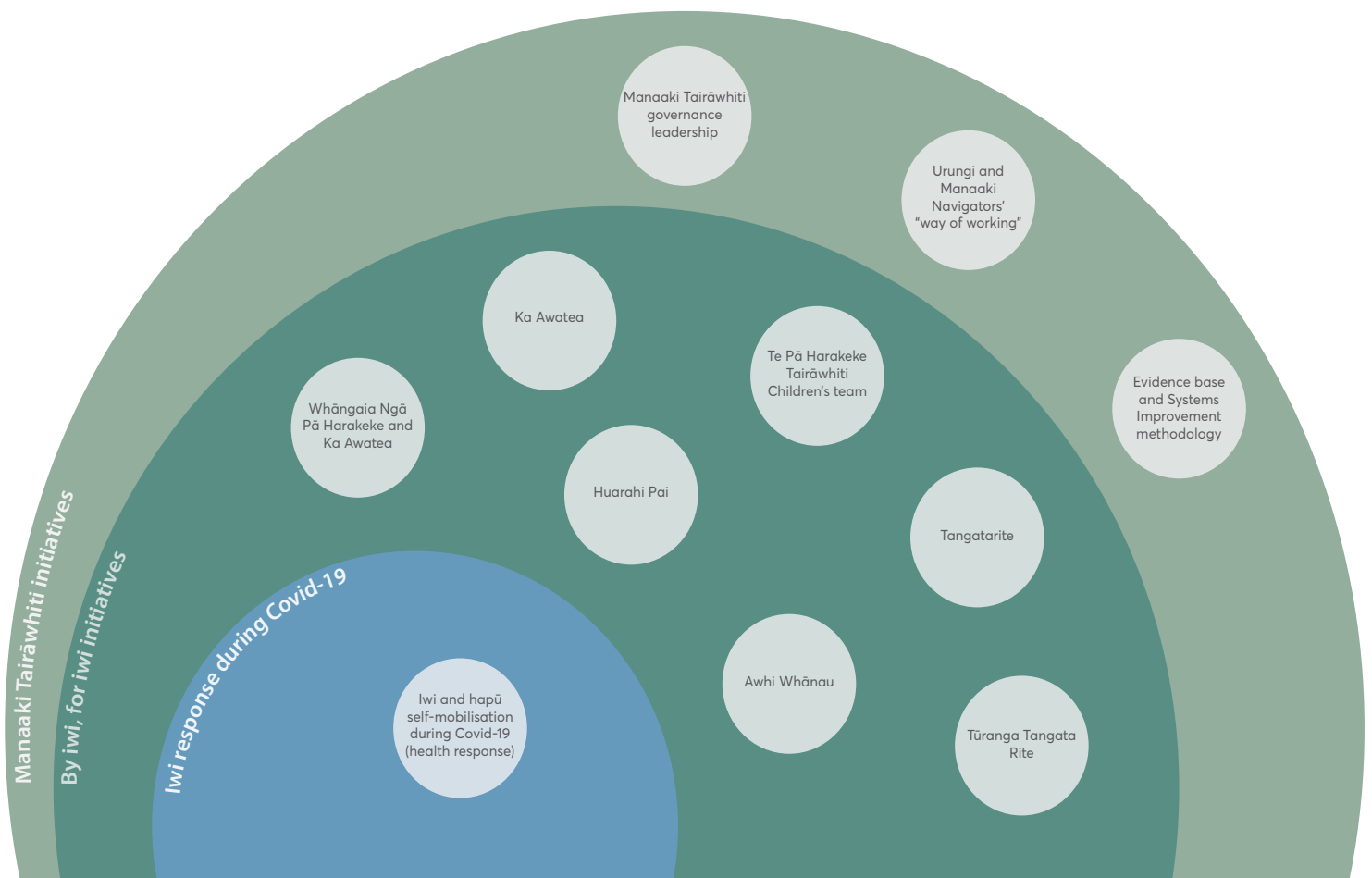


Figure 11. Overview of iwi-led (by iwi, for iwi) initiatives in Te Tairāwhiti.

2.3 | Health and social initiatives

Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke

Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke (WNPH) is a national family violence prevention and crisis management initiative wherein police, iwi, and qualified kaiāwhina work jointly using a trust-based whole-of-whānau approach to prevent and reduce family harm. Originally piloted in 2017 through the PBIs, WNPH has since launched in other regions such as the Bay of Plenty, Kāpiti-Mana, and Dunedin.

Central to this mahi is the involvement of whānau and communities – for instance, alongside police during a call-out to reduce tension – and ensuring whānau voice is heard in understanding an individual's whole story and making referrals for support.

Kaimahi focus on building an ongoing relationship with whānau, shifting away from a crisis-driven response to one where staff do "whatever it takes, whenever, by whomever" within the context of established trust. In this way, WNPH is unique from other family violence interventions as engagement occurs at the earliest point of need – regardless of whether an 'offence' is identified – and responses are grounded in "what is good for whānau".

This intervention is based on a tikanga māori approach to the crisis; taking a long-term sustainable approach to the prevention and reduction of family harm. The programme is also tailored to the local context, building a model of family harm prevention and intervention that works to meet the specific needs of the community.

In Te Tairāwhiti, WNPH comes under Manaaki Tairāwhiti's iwi-led PBI remit. The team is based out of Te Rūnanga o Tūrangānui-ā-Kiwa's (TROTAK) headquarters – a neutral territory that makes it easier to seek help.

The Tairāwhiti WNPH team comprises 26 staff – around one third police, one third iwi, and the remaining third kaiāwhina. Iwi leadership is reflected across all levels of the team.

Working within this multi-disciplinary and multi-agency environment, WNPH walk alongside whānau to help them navigate the system and create a plan forward.

For decades Te Tairāwhiti has grappled with issues of family harm, but small improvements have been realised in recent years, largely through the shift in focus from assessing and referring people to services to a focus on tackling the root causes of family violence through a proactive and preventative approach.

2.3 | Health and social initiatives

Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke



Image: Whāngaia team speaking with whānau
Credit: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Results in this area are hard to quantify, as increased reporting may reflect an increased trust and confidence in kaimahi and the programme. However, an evaluation¹⁵ of WNP in Counties-Manukau from March 2019 found a total reduction in family harm by 15% between the period 2009–2018. There was also an immediate reduction in harm by repeat offenders, as well as an increase in requests for service, once again likely indicative of trust in staff.

A news article¹⁶ on the WNP initiative in Te Tairāwhiti has also showcased the success of adopting a different approach to tackling family harm in the region:

"The Whāngaia way of doing things was very different. It involved all of us, not just the victim. It involved the perpetrator too, and it meant we all got together to support my granddaughter and got things right.

It works. It's not about locking people up and throwing away the key... These people need helping. That makes them better people, and that's better for everyone."

2.3 | Health and social initiatives

Ka Awatea

Ka Awatea represents a systems improvement process for family harm services collectively across Te Tairāwhiti. Resourced largely via the Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke initiative, Ka Awatea commenced in 2020 with the intention of improving social outcomes via a greater emphasis on whānau voice and needs.

Based on System Improvement (SI) methodology, Ka Awatea has been guided by three key phases:

1. Understand the system using a structured framework by gathering evidence and data. This included observations, case studies, interviews, systems mapping, data collection, and workshops and presentations. The purpose of this phase is to identify and document what actually matters to whānau, so that this can drive change in response. It also serves to uncover the underlying thinking and assumptions of the current system, so that these can be challenged and addressed.

Findings from this phase indicated that whilst a large number of agencies and community groups were involved with whānau as part of the system, there were limited connections between different areas (e.g., prevention, intake, and hand-off) and importantly that there was very limited knowledge in the prevention space.

2. Test and learn includes a redesign of the system and establishing a new purpose and principles based on learnings from phase one. These were then tested (proof of concept) for their effectiveness, with plans for scaling the approach underway. Here, the original Manaaki Tairāwhiti 'way of working' (described on p64) was tested, refined, and evaluated to incorporate preventative work.

Findings from initial evaluations were largely positive, whilst also indicating that the system can be streamlined (minimise wasted resources) significantly under the right approach.

3. Make normal the Ka Awatea way of working across the social services sector. Work is currently underway for this step.

In this way, Ka Awatea represents an exemplar for continuous learning and improvement, and offers a proven methodology for change across the social sector. Being grounded in whānau voice also means it is uniquely positioned to drive transformational and sustainable change in Te Tairāwhiti.

2.3 | Health and social initiatives

Huarahi Pai

Huarahi Pai is a marae-based rehabilitation programme for users of methamphetamine and their whānau. This community initiative driven by Te Riu o Waiapu Hapū Trust is supported by the Salvation Army and partially funded by various other regional bodies such as Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou, Trust Tairāwhiti, and Manaaki Tairāwhiti.

First piloted in 2016 and originally based out of Rakaihoea Marae in Ruatoria (pictured at left), the rehabilitation programme developed out of the recognition that Te Tairāwhiti as a region is affected by methamphetamine use – with one in five households being affected – and the devastating impacts on whānau as a result.

Huarahi Pai adopts a whānau-based approach to rehabilitation, taking the entire whānau on the journey of recovery and healing together. Part of this programme includes an 8-week marae component, where hapū can care for their own communities on their tūrangawaewae, with an opportunity for whānau to stay on-site.

Having whānau stay on the marae helps them understand and support change when ex-users return to their home environment. This is in contrast to traditional residential rehabilitation facilities where users are unable to have their whānau along with them – if they can secure a place in the facility in the first instance. Indeed, Ministry of Health population funding formulas for addiction services mean that there are no such rehabilitation facilities in Te Tairāwhiti.

Graduates of the programme are supported over the longer term by a navigator who provides pastoral care for at least three months, in addition to the support from the wider group itself. These participants and their whānau are also encouraged to become volunteers for future programmes, passing on the support received and their learnings.

Preliminary evidence to date is positive and has indicated a drop in offending and improvements in whānau relationships.



Image: Rakaihoea Marae, Ruatoria
Credit: Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou

2.3 | Health and social initiatives

Te Pā Harakeke Te Tairāwhiti's Children's Team

Te Pā Harakeke is Te Tairāwhiti's Children's Team – one of ten teams across Aotearoa – launched in October 2015 by then-Minister for Social Development, Hon Anne Tolley¹⁷. The initiative was aimed at providing support for an initial 430 tamariki with multiple and complex needs, as well as their whānau.

As with other wrap-around initiatives, tamariki have a single point of contact who helps coordinate support by various agencies, NGOs, and iwi organisations. Services are primarily focused on prevention and early-intervention, and designed to protect tamariki wellbeing, set them up for success in later life, and build whānau resilience long-term.

The vision is "for all Tairāwhiti tamariki to be loved, be nurtured, be treasured, belong" by being child-centred and whānau-led. Success for whānau looks like achieving resilience, potential, leadership, transformation, and whānau ora. Within this, there is a strong emphasis on the child's voice and a focus on early intervention options.

A qualitative evaluation was undertaken in 2017 to understand whānau narratives and test the relevance of the engagement and success framework. This evaluation identified three key system conditions crucial to achieving success: whānaungatanga (fostering connections), hāpaitia (empowering and supporting), and āwhinatia (providing practical support). These conditions continue to underpin the team's mahi.

Oranga Tamariki has since devolved the Children's Team services to a range of iwi and community organisations across the country. In Te Tairāwhiti, this service was transitioned to a community-based model, initially through Tūranga Health, and subsequently through the (TROTAK) rūnanga.

The thinking underlying this operational system – "relentless optimism, whatever it takes!" – has largely been influenced in design by the Tairāwhiti way of working with whānau, as evidenced in many of the other case studies illustrated in this section.

Given the approach is largely aligned with Ka Awatea principles, future plans for Te Pā Harakeke includes joining up with the Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke System Improvement team to weave together the two strands of work.



Image: Harakeke flax bush

2.3 | Health and social initiatives

Awahi Whānau - No Further Actions (NFAs)

Developed by Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou (TRONPnui), Awahi Whānau is an iwi-led initiative aimed at stopping the transfer of Ngāti Porou tamariki mokopuna into state care.

Awahi Whānau provides assistance for those Ngāti Porou whānau and tamariki who have been determined as needing No Further Action (NFAs). Specifically, the programme responds to reports of concern that fail to meet the current statutory threshold for intervention.

Kaiāwhina work with whānau to ensure they are safe and have a plan going forward, or alternatively that they can access support and early interventions through the rūnanga and other agencies.

Since gaining consent and access to whānau information remains a challenge, the Awahi Whānau team work closely with Oranga Tamariki through a partnered response to identify and support these whānau, on a case-by-case basis. This response works largely because iwi work in a partnership capacity with Oranga Tamariki and are able to draw on their whanaungatanga with their hapori in following up with whānau.

As the rūnanga puts it¹⁸:

"the best interests and the future of our mokopuna are our first priority – not the policy and legislative outcomes desired by the State."

In this way, Awahi Whānau is a process for iwi to take a community approach to responding to difficult issues that whānau might be experiencing. The programme advocates for whānau, thereby minimising the risk of Ngāti Porou tamariki mokopuna going into state care over the longer term and experiencing escalated harm.



Image: Youth mentoring
Credit: Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou

2.3 | Justice and social initiatives

Tangatarite

Tangatarite is a pathway for giving effect to Te Ao Mārama, presented by Chief Judge Heemi Taumaunu at the Norris Ward Annual Lecture in 2020. The vision for Te Ao Mārama is that "the district court is a place where all people can come to seek justice, no matter what their means or abilities, regardless of their culture or ethnicity, who they are or where they are from."¹⁹

Underpinning this is a set of principles that enable equitable treatment in process, outcomes, and interactions for all whānau who enter the court, with an aim to enhance connections between the court and the community. The model entails a partnership between the crown (through the district court), iwi, and the community – with the specific approach varying across regions to reflect the strengths and preferences of local iwi and communities.

In Te Tairāwhiti, the local iwi leadership – through Toitū

Tairāwhiti – have collectively agreed to support Te Ao Mārama in the region in a partnership capacity.

Here, iwi have the capabilities to:

- Uphold the tapu and mana of our people;
- Consciously live by traditional values and tikanga;
- Take responsibility for our whānau and their wellbeing; and
- Ensure our tamariki and mokopuna are nurtured and protected throughout their lives.

Locally, TROTAK are mandated by Toitū Tairāwhiti to design and deliver a service that can support whānau in the justice system. This is Tangatarite. Tangatarite, meaning of equal status, is therefore a reciprocal commitment to supporting, honouring, and treating each party in the justice system with respect.

As with other initiatives, iwi have the mana and connections with the local community that enable them to support whānau, provide leadership to the community, and act with integrity to remain accountable.

Under Tangatarite – which has iwi partnership at both a strategic and operational level – iwi are best placed to determine what is best "by iwi, for iwi". Unlike with traditional processes for district court, iwi are in a unique position to ensure the revival or restoring of mana (for whānau, hapū, and iwi), as they engage with the court system. This is especially important as we know that multiple social system failures have over time led to māori being overrepresented in the criminal justice system, leading to inequities in treatment and sentencing outcomes.

Following the launch of Te Ao Mārama in Hamilton, Te Tairāwhiti is the second region where this model will be rolled formally launched, after an extended pilot. Chief Judge Taumaunu has noted that Te Tairāwhiti has been specifically chosen to adopt this approach as it is (i) a smaller regional court; (ii) well-supported by its local community; and (iii) has services and agencies willing and able to assist the needs of those whānau involved with the court²⁰. These are some of the very same reasons we argue Te Tairāwhiti is well positioned to be a test case for social services devolution to local iwi.



Image: Gisborne District Court
Credit: TSE Architects

2.3 | Educational initiatives

Tūranga Tangata Rite

Tūranga Tangata Rite is a kura for all taura across Tūranganui-a-Kiwa. Located at Te Whare Matatuahu – a historically significant site as the location of a whare wānanga of Hinehākiringi – the school was established in response to growing recognition that an increasing number of rangatahi in Te Tairāwhiti were disengaging from mainstream education.

Through negotiations with the crown in 2016, TROTAK were able to open a unique iwi-driven learning space for Years 9-11 taura, while still retaining its tino rangatiratanga status. Resultantly, the state-integrated co-ed kura provides an alternative kaupapa māori learning environment for local rangatahi.

Founded on tikanga-a-iwi principles (of Rongowhakaata, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri, Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki), the kura nurtures the development of cultural identity for taura through a tailored localised curriculum.

Developed and delivered through a by iwi, for iwi approach, Tūranga Tangata Rite provides a platform for change for rangatahi through education. Over the long term, the kura's vision is aimed at enhancing iwi economic and cultural development in the region long term.



Images: Activities at the kura
Credit: Tūranga Tangata Rite

2.3 | Case study: Covid-19 response

Iwi health response during Covid-19

Self-mobilisation during health crises isn't new for iwi – dating back to epidemics since first contact with European settlers. More recently, iwi response to Covid-19 response in the region was proactive and self-reliant, whilst also coordinating with the Civil Defence Emergency Management, local government, and other agencies to deliver a stream of civil defence and health interventions.

Below we highlight general facets of this health response, showcasing detail through the case of Tūrangā Health (overleaf).

» Vaccinations

It has been argued that Māori vaccination and Covid-19 infection rates are one of a few instances in Aotearoa history where Māori have achieved better social outcomes than non-Māori. A key success in Te Tairāwhiti in particular has been the high vaccination and testing rates, in large part due to a coordinated leadership from iwi health providers – Tūrangā Health and Ngāti Porou Hauora – in mobilising and enacting self-determination²¹.

As of March 2023, 88.6% of those aged 12 and over in Te Tairāwhiti had received at least their first dose of the vaccine, against the national average of 90.8%. Vaccination rates for Māori in the region

are even more compelling, at 86.4%, compared to 85.9% nationally²². These successes are in large part due to the iwi response in the region.

» Border controls

Iwi also set up checkpoints, supported by volunteers and local police, to maintain compliance with travel restrictions across regions during the different lockdown 'levels'. Not only was this directly aligned with government policy, but it provided an additional layer of protection for the entire community, not just Māori, in ensuring the health and safety of vulnerable groups such as kaumātua – was prioritised.

» Mobilising networks

Whānau and hapū networks were also used as key channels in conveying information and maintaining connections during and after the lockdown periods. This was especially crucial as iwi providers identified that centralised messaging and systems weren't working for everyone, and that local faces were more effective.

Food and hygiene packs were also distributed, both through these networks and more broadly at community hubs set up across the region. In this way, iwi "networks can and do unlock resources that would otherwise not have been

available for community relief. Contrary to the popular view that Māori 'drain' resources, these patterns demonstrate that Māori networks unequivocally increase the total pool of resources available."²³.

Critical success factors were:

- Early and proactive planning by iwi for the pandemic response;
- Investment in training staff, purchasing personal protective equipment, and resourcing supporting infrastructure and systems to support staff working safely – even though this investment placed additional strain on already stretched-thin providers; and
- Kaimahi going above and beyond to meet whānau where they were – i.e., in their homes, cars, over the phone, and even Facebook messenger – rather than just waiting for them to come into clinics.

Together, these by iwi, for iwi case studies showcase iwi innovation within the backdrop of a general expectation that government either would not or could not provide the protection needed by many Māori communities. It also emphasises just how self-reliant iwi and hapū groups can and have had to be in designing and deploying their own solutions to complex and evolving health and social issues.

2.3 | Case study: Covid-19 response

Tūranga Health

Tūranga Health's kaupapa is grounded in "local faces, local spaces, and local voices". CEO Reweti Ropiha speaks of the iwi provider's commitment to the region, noting "it's a privilege to work in our backyard".

The team are intimately familiar with the region and its people, and knew that a centralised messaging and systems around Covid-19 vaccinations were not going to work in Te Tairāwhiti. Instead, they led a mobilised vaccination effort across 82 settings, including parks, streets and marae "to get to where people are". People were encouraged to get their vaccine with free coffees and burgers, making it a whole "whānau event and deliver a great whānau experience".

Through real-time on-the-ground intelligence gathering and data tracking, kaimahi were able to ensure whānau voices were being heard. They also used whānau voice insights to identify which groups within the community were being missed (for instance, rangatahi, young mums, people with disabilities), and drew on key people in their networks to build social capital and trust to encourage those who were hesitant to engage, including vulnerable groups and those affiliated with gangs.

Tūranga Health's adaptability and agile response is largely down to the planning and design work done early on by their highly experienced multidisciplinary team who brought a mix of business knowledge in systems training, clinical and technical expertise, and local experience to the challenge at hand.

Ropiha also emphasises that "trust and confidence is key" in devolving responsibility to iwi providers. While accountability and transparency was delivered through real-time data sharing with government, this approach was largely successful due to a high level of trust (by both government as well as the community) in Tūranga Health, and the team being empowered to act flexibly and refine their approach since they were not bound by a specific contract requirements.

Their ask of government was not more investment but instead to give them credence for their approach, design, and delivery; with Ropiha noting they were happy to deliver on transparency "but give us decision-making".



Image: Tūranga Health vaccination van
Photo credit: Tom Kitchin (RNZ)

2.3 | Case study: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Manaaki Tairāwhiti: A (PBI) in Tairāwhiti

In 2016, Cabinet established three PBIs to improve outcomes for at-risk children and their whānau, by devolving collective decision-making and discretion to the local level. This initiative was partly in response to the Productivity Commission's 2015²⁴ inquiry into more effective social services, which found the social service system to be "bureaucratic, inflexible, wasteful, and unable to learn from experience", while proposing a number of recommendations including greater use of devolution.

Manaaki Tairāwhiti is one of two PBIs still in operation, and represents the regional leadership collective for social wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti. It is aimed at bold, transformative change to improve wellbeing within one generation, so that whānau can meet their own aspirations and lead fulfilling lives, and so that all of Te Tairāwhiti are flourishing.

Manaaki's mahi is grounded in iwi partnerships under Te Tiriti, with the aim of increasing iwi, hapū, and whānau self-determination and autonomy. The collective responds to complex, intergenerational needs through the tailored provision of social services.

Since a lot of Manaaki's work is focused on those whānau who have previous negative or harmful experiences with the social services system, Manaaki's mahi seeks to both uplift whānau, while also identifying existing interventions and system barriers that continue to push them down. Indeed, Manaaki has always created programmes of work to investigate barriers and improve the system for whānau. This work is detailed on the pages following, across four key result areas.



We are unabashedly Tairāwhiti, with all of the strengths and opportunities that come with that - committed, small, potentially nimble, connected, with a strong foundation in kaupapa Māori. We are rooted in this region and are willing to be innovative and unique in our approach.

– Manaaki Tairāwhiti Strategic Action Plan



Image: Manaaki Tairāwhiti team
Photo credit: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

2.3 | Case study: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Manaaki Tairāwhiti: A (PBI) in Tairāwhiti

As we will also show throughout this section and across the report (see also section 3.3), Manaaki has matured as a collective since it was established in 2016. The most recent Strategic Action Plan 2023-2025²⁵ also paves the way forward, in terms of its future focus areas and plans for driving and evaluating system-wide change. This progress (past and future/intended) can be conceptualised in four stages, as shown in the infographic below.

The remaining pages delve into specific aspects of Manaaki Tairāwhiti that have contributed to its success and maturity, including its governance leadership; Urungi and the Manaaki “way of working” using a whānau-led approach; and the building of a robust evidence base using system improvement methodology. We then close off this case study by summarising critical success factors and lessons that can be transferred for the broader devolution of social services in the region.

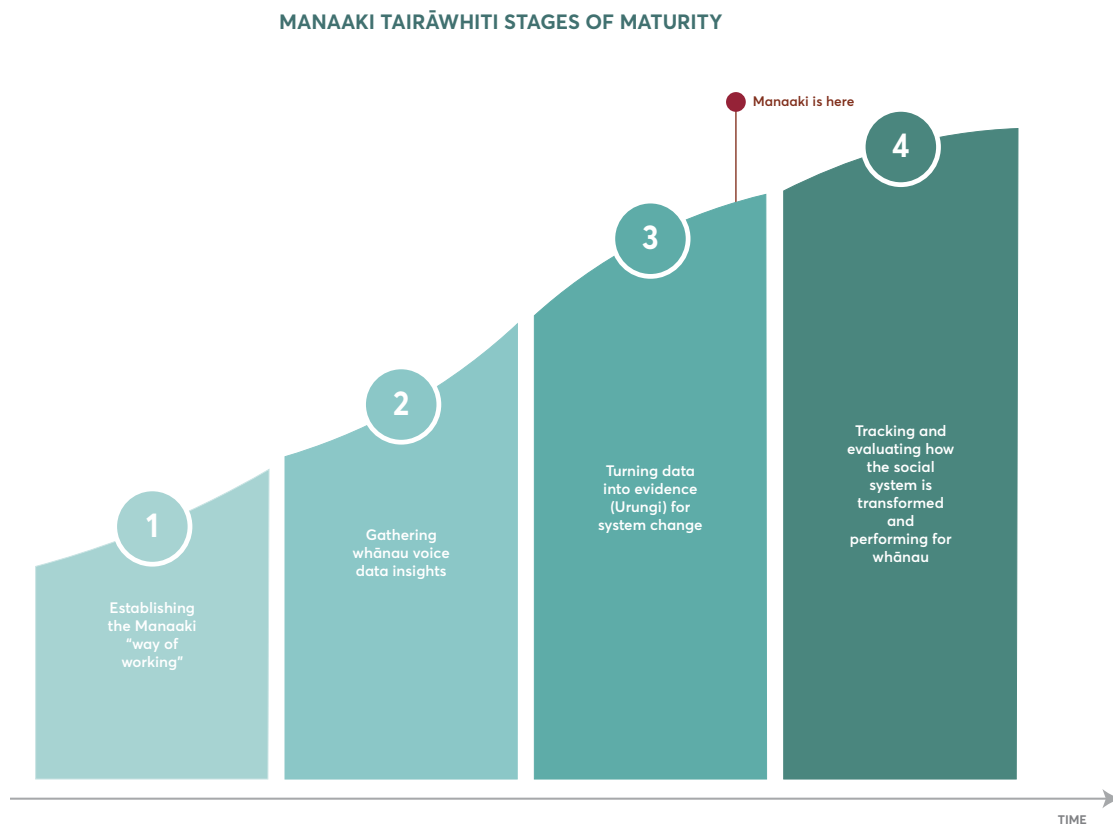


Figure 12. Manaaki Tairāwhiti’s maturity over time, conceptualised as stages, reflecting their strategic direction.

2.3 | Case study: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Manaaki Tairāwhiti's four key result areas

Since its inception, Manaaki Tairāwhiti has been steadily shifting the dial to improve outcomes in its key result areas of family violence, addiction, child wellbeing, and housing. These four areas have a significant impact on whānau wellbeing.

The figure below provides a high-level overview of this mahi, as outlined in the Strategic Action Plan²⁶. Work in this space will not only make immediate improvements

for whānau wellbeing, but will also be used to track the effectiveness of the collective's broader work on systems change and a devolved social sector.

Beyond this, Manaaki Tairāwhiti will also play an integral part in the recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle, working with other lead agencies and key regional actors.

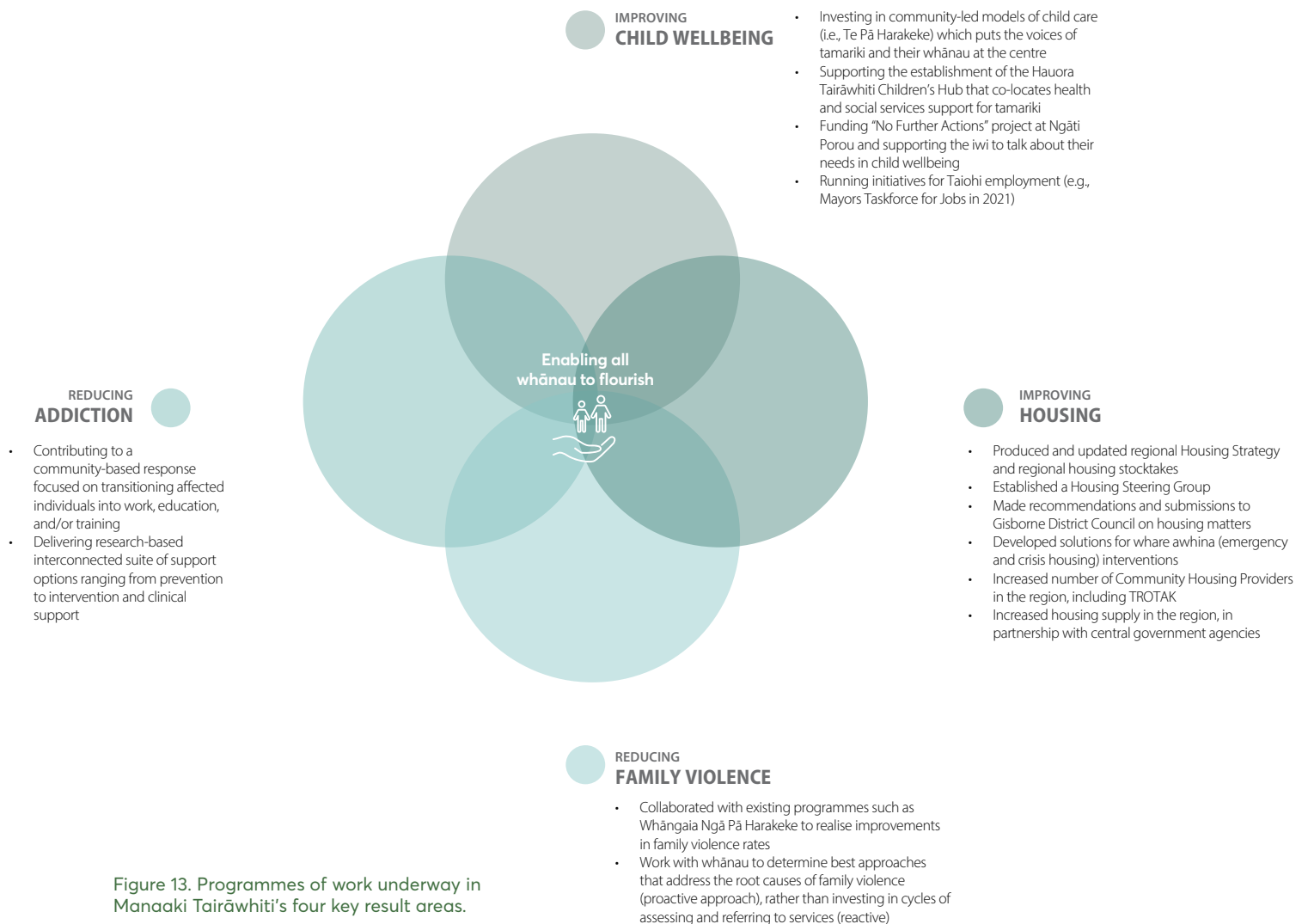


Figure 13. Programmes of work underway in Manaaki Tairāwhiti's four key result areas.

2.3 | Case study: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Manaaki's governance leadership

As the iwi-led (under Te Rūnanganui o Tūranga-nui-a-Kiwa) regional leadership group for social wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti, Manaaki's governance group represents a local coalition of the willing. This is the first point of difference from the other PBI (the South Auckland Wellbeing Board) as Manaaki is iwi-led rather than agency-led.

The governance group also comprises the Gisborne District Council mayor, as well as local non-government organisations and representatives from crown agencies in the region. Importantly, these key social wellbeing representatives have the highest possible delegation powers within their own organisation to effect change and make a difference.

The second point of difference for this collective is that while Manaaki Tairāwhiti was formalised as a PBI in 2016, its leaders have had a long history of working together to assist whānau and lift regional wellbeing, and are committed to working consistently with the collective's shared tikanga.

This has enabled the gathering and accumulation of evidence and insights into how the social service sector works for whānau, and what barriers and challenges persist. These efforts also signal the importance of collective action across the sector, to ensure transformative and lasting change.

As such, Manaaki is mandated by the crown to make decisions that enable local solutions to local issues, without the constraints of national-level policies that do not always consider local circumstances. Central to this is the devolution of social service funding that enables iwi and community organisations to design, deliver, and provide services to whānau based on need and local context.

In fact, the case for a devolved, local operating model is clearly emphasised in the group's earlier Strategic Action Plan 2021-2022²⁷:

"Local leaders are ideally placed to lead the way for Tairāwhiti because they have the skills to make the right decisions, they are indelibly linked to Tairāwhiti, they have an enduring commitment to our people and place, they have the trusted relationships with whānau and they have the strongest level of accountability to each other. In essence delivery will be more appropriately targeted, effective and sustainable."

Together, the expertise, mana, and whanaungatanga of the governance group means Manaaki Tairāwhiti is also well placed to step into an interim role, as outlined in our devolution roadmap (see section 2.2), and champion regional transformation so that all Tairāwhiti whānau are flourishing.

Equally, since Te Tairāwhiti is a relatively small region this enables the Manaaki governance board to work closely with other agencies in the region focused on economic, cultural, and environmental development. Working collaboratively in this way results in a more holistic approach toward lifting regional wellbeing.

2.3 | Case study: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Urungi and the Manaaki “way of working”

Manaaki Tairāwhiti’s success to date is largely driven by a systems improvement approach that is whānau-led. This approach draws on whānau realities to inform system change, underpinned by iwi, agency, NGO, and community collaboration²⁸. It is a principled “way of working”.

Specifically, Manaaki navigators adopt a strengths-based approach that helps whānau navigate existing social systems; build whānau capability; and pull for support from other agencies where needed. Prioritising whānau needs means doing “whatever it takes” to assist them, including a commitment by navigators to persist until the issue is resolved – no matter how long it takes²⁹.

This builds a trust-based relationship with whānau over time. It also entails a significant iwi investment in workforce capability development for front-line staff and navigators (for example, through use of Manaaki coaches).

Alongside this, navigators also collect information on system performance from a whānau perspective. Rather than traditional quantitative metrics – such as number of clients/whānau assisted – that offer little meaningful insight into how well the system is working, Manaaki evaluates whether whānau needs have been met and what barriers get in the way of meeting those needs.

For this same reason, rather than using eligibility

criteria, referrals to Manaaki are based on need with whānau entering through a number of routes. In this way, Manaaki has been able to serve those whānau who have particularly complex needs that have not been met by existing government agency processes and systems.

In recent years, with the support of external funding, Manaaki has been able to develop **Urungi** – a prototype software solution designed for easier and more effective data collection. Urungi allows navigators to capture whānau voice (i.e., in their own words) and categorise the demand type, theme needs, record system responses, and identify outcomes. Perceived barriers experienced at different stages are also identified as part of this process.

This data is synthesised and analysed by Manaaki coaches, who then present their insight reports to operational leaders and the governance group. The operational leadership team are then in a position to carry out further analysis of the system barriers, with agencies using this information to test and learn how to improve the system for whānau. This represents the next stage of work, with the intention being that Manaaki leaders (through the governance group) take regional and national action.



Image: Manaaki Tairāwhiti operations leads meeting
Photo credit: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

2.3 | Case study: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Urungi and the Manaaki “way of working”

Over the last two years Urungi has facilitated anonymised data collection of nearly 1,100 whānau who have engaged with the social services system in Te Tairāwhiti. As a recent example, 337 of the needs captured through Urungi were related to care and respite. A synthesis of these insights were presented to the Manaaki Tairāwhiti governance group in February 2023, with case study data published in May³⁰. That case study showed that unfortunately whānau who presented with care and respite needs encountered a barrier rate of around 75% in terms of getting their needs met.

Evaluating the system’s performance ensures that agency blindspots are identified and opportunities are identified to improve the way the system works for whānau. Indeed, Manaaki has always strived to create work programmes that investigate barriers for whānau. This is not currently being done elsewhere. What’s more, Urungi provides better and more actionable insights than existing national information (case management) systems that track individual data.

Collectively, this informs the Manaaki “way of working”, with purpose and principles at the foundation of this mahi. This “way of working” is also reflected across many other initiatives in Te Tairāwhiti as described throughout this section, including Te Pā Harakeke, Ka Awatea, Tangatarite, and across local Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Kāinga Ora agencies.

2.3 | Case study: Manaaki Tairāwhiti

Evidence base and Systems Improvement methodology

Since its inception in 2016 Manaaki Tairāwhiti has accumulated a significant evidence base about what is and isn't working for whānau, locally. The collective also uses a "test, learn, adapt" Systems Improvement (SI) methodology (for example, through Ka Awatea) that has led to changes within local agencies as well as improvements in cross-agency processes. Insights from the evidence base and SI evaluation are detailed in section 3.3.

However, as we have illustrated throughout this case study, there are compelling lessons on how a whānau-led approach ensures services are responsive to local circumstances, thereby lifting wellbeing at a whānau and regional level. These lessons, in the form of critical success factors, are detailed in the sidebar at right.

While these factors are not easily replicable or transferable to other contexts, the learnings may be useful in informing other communities' approaches in supporting whānau.

Critical success factors

Evaluations of Manaaki Tairāwhiti attribute the success of this PBI to the following factors:

- Being an iwi-led initiative that uses a by iwi, for iwi approach to social services delivery;
- Adopting a "no wrong doors" approach in terms of referral or eligibility criteria, which enables effective handover of cases;
- Centring whānau voice and taking an 'ecosystem of support' view in assisting whānau and in capturing insights;
- Use of a strengths-based approach that meets whānau "where they are" and walks alongside them to build capability, doing "whatever it takes" (within the existing budget) to meet their needs, and prioritising early intervention to stop escalation where possible;
- A "test, learn, adapt" way of making System Improvements (through the SI methodology) that has led to improvements in internal and cross-agency processes;
- Investing (time and resource) into appropriate workforce development for frontline staff and navigators;
- Consistently monitoring, analysing, and learning from the work to date – including commissioning reviews and research to build a solid evidence base;
- Collaborative working among senior leaders who live in the region, know each other, and are committed for the long haul; and the
- Mana, expertise, and leadership styles of iwi-leaders who have a history of working together for the benefit of the wider Tairāwhiti region.

2.3 | Case studies

Summary

» Lessons learned

As our case studies have shown, a range of by iwi, for iwi initiatives have been successfully rolled out in Te Tairāwhiti; during business-as-usual and at times of crises. Collectively, they highlight the importance of:

- Being whānau-led in the design, development, and delivery of social services for prevention and sustainable harm reduction;
- Investing time in building trusting relationships with whānau to build an understanding of their actual needs and provide support in ways that work for them;
- A tikanga māori approach to service provision, which privileges the individual's story and uses a whole-of-whānau approach, when making decisions about services, referrals, and ongoing support;
- Collaborative, joined-up action with a range of providers working together to ensure smooth service provision and support for whānau with complex needs, "pulling in" for support where needed rather than referring on;
- A focus on removing barriers and addressing shortcomings in conventional forms of social service provision; and
- Appropriate resourcing to enable monitoring progress and evaluating performance of programmes, as well as identifying potential barriers to achieving successful outcomes.

Further, Manaaki Tairāwhiti's efforts to date have been crucial in growing the capabilities, knowledge, and evidence base for self-determination in the region. These learnings, along with our burgeoning evidence base and region-specific insights – outlined in Section 3.3 – will inform the proposed devolution of social services to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti.

» The need for resourcing

Importantly, most initiatives showcased in this section have arisen to meet existing needs for whānau that are largely going unmet through the failings of the existing social system. Further, many continue to remain largely self-funded through rūnanga or charitable trusts, rather than receiving dedicated central government resourcing.

Even during emergency times – such as Covid-19 – the resourcing and financial costs of acting early and creating their own infrastructure are largely borne by iwi themselves. Where initiatives receive some central government funding, these still remain underfunded, placing additional strain on iwi and hapū resources^{31,32}. These social interventions have occurred largely through the good will of iwi and community leaders.

Recent emergencies and natural disasters have significantly increased pressure on social services in the region, and will only continue to increase in the future. Thus, there is a clear need for a major paradigm shift in how iwi-led responses are resourced and funded.

» The need to harness existing capability

Iwi in Te Tairāwhiti have a long history of self-mobilisation and are well-versed in designing their own solutions to help whānau. Iwi also comprise a core civil defence function in the region. These are all expressions of self-determination and tino rangatiratanga. Even more, these initiatives are occurring during business as usual – not just during times of crisis – indicative of a substantial delivery capability by local iwi.

We need to harness this capability so that change is occurring systematically across the region, and that this is resourced sufficiently and fairly, rather than simply relying on the good will of iwi. There has never been a better time to relinquish control and let this mahi flourish under a devolved model of social services.

2.3 | References

» Endnotes

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Section 3: The background

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3.3 The strategic context | p93

3.1

Options analysis



3.1 | Options analysis

The process we've followed

The figure below illustrates our process in assessing the range of approaches to social services in Aotearoa.

In step 1, we identify the long-list of options and visually contrast this on a continuum of centralisation to decentralisation.

In step 2, we describe the strengths and potential limitations with each option, providing examples of where these have been deployed.

In step 3, we set out the criteria for assessment (i.e., our objectives) – this being the extent to which each option represents a genuine crown-iwi model of partnership, and therefore gives effect to the articles of Te Tiriti, as well as the extent to which it is likely to result in improved wellbeing (or harm) for whānau.

In step 4, we use a Multi Criteria Analysis to compare against the different options and land on those most likely to deliver on our identified objectives and achieve the desired future state in Te Tairāwhiti outlined earlier. These options comprise key milestones in our roadmap to devolution. In this way, our proposed approach involves a series of increasingly decentralised steps until there is sufficient resourcing and capacity to transition to a full devolved service model.

This section details our assessment process and provides the rationale behind our logic for devolution to iwi as the social service approach most likely to deliver on improved mauri ora for whānau in Te Tairāwhiti.

» Our long list of solution options

An overview of the continuum of solution options, followed by a detailed assessment of each option.

71

> this discussion starts on page 71

» Assessment dimensions and criteria

Description of our two assessment dimensions: Te Tiriti and improved wellbeing, as well as the specific framework (criteria) used.

81

> this discussion starts on page 81

» Options analysis

Multi Criteria Analysis of our long-list options, which enables us to land on our preferred solution(s).

84

> this discussion starts on page 84

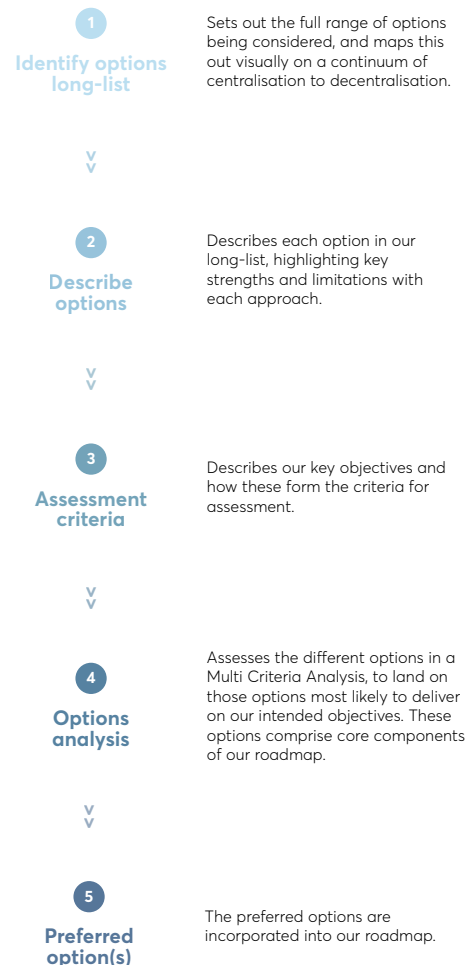


Figure 14. Our approach to assessing the full continuum of solution options.

3.1 | Options analysis

The continuum of solution options

There are a number of models for how social services can be designed, commissioned, and delivered; both in Aotearoa and overseas. The figure below maps these options as a continuum ranging from a fully centralised system on the left to a fully devolved model on the right.

We recognise there can be variation both within and between options, with a near infinite number of possibilities when visualised as a continuum. However, for the immediate purpose of our analysis options are presented as archetypes for easy comparison and assessment.

The following pages detail how each of these models work, contextualised within Te Tairāwhiti where relevant and possible.

We then go on to more tightly define the scope of our preferred solution, upon completion of the Multi Criteria Analysis.

» On sharing power and subsidiarity

While our long-list options vary in many aspects, they mainly differ in the extent to which power (along with decision-making and resources) is shared by central government. Underpinning this power sharing is the concept of **subsidiarity** which argues for "decisionmaking [to] be placed at the lowest appropriate level... putting decision-making power into the hands of people or organisations with the greatest knowledge of an issue and helping them exercise this power as effectively as possible."³³ An implication of subsidiarity is that those with the deepest understanding of the local context and needs are better positioned to shape solutions that will work best for them. In short, this is about place-based decision-making.

Subsidiarity as a concept is well-researched and accepted as a model of practice, both internationally and within Aotearoa. Place-Based Initiatives are a prime example, along with the Localities approach currently being piloted as part of the national health reforms. Subsidiarity is also currently in practice through our system of local government. Our case for devolution is built on this same principle, but advocates for extending this one step further by advocating for not just regional decision-making but devolution of the entire social services system to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti.

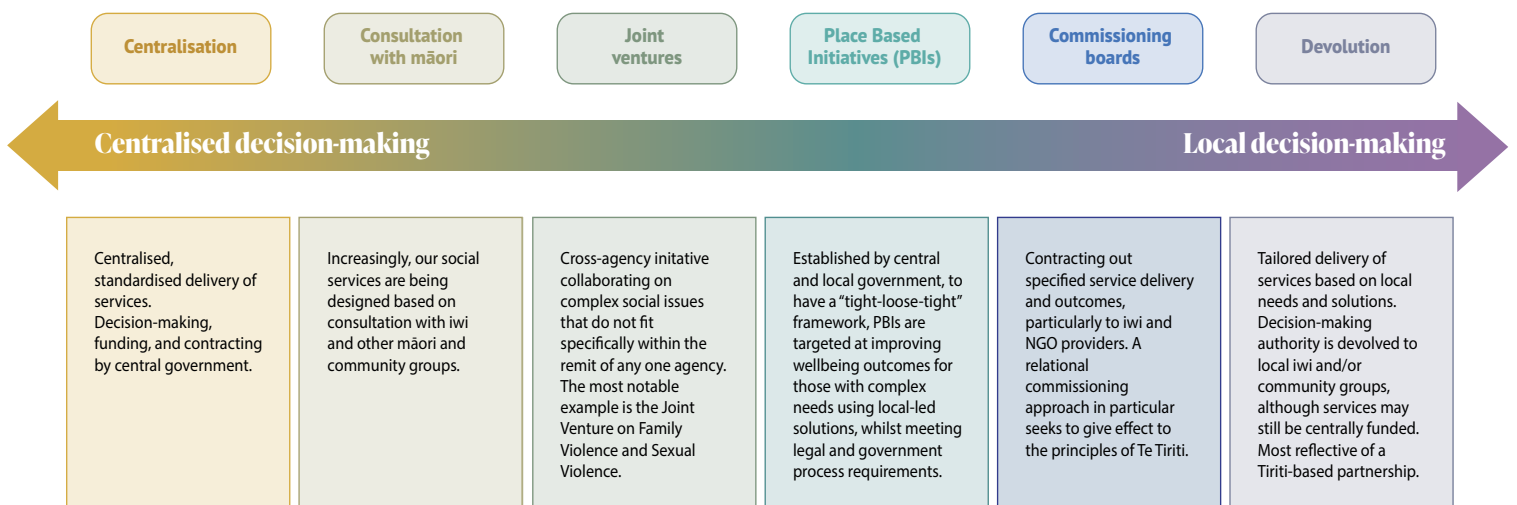


Figure 15. Models for social services ranging on a continuum of centralisation to decentralisation.

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Centralisation

Centralisation and decentralisation represent opposite ends of a continuum of modes of control. Here, we refer to centralisation as a model where most significant decision-making happens at the core of government, with a tight system of control and accountability.

Within the context of social services, this option would see standardised service provision, with central government retaining power over decision-making, funding, commissioning, and regulating of services. Decision-making is also typically focused on fiscal outcomes and improving efficiencies.

While centralised systems may prove effective for a sizeable proportion of the population, standardised service design and delivery frequently fails to meet the needs of vulnerable and historically disadvantaged groups. In particular, colonisation in Aotearoa's has created an uneven playing field for māori. A highly centralised model that favours horizontal equity (everyone receives the same service) over vertical

equity (people in different circumstances receive different services) therefore does nothing to address the historic and ongoing impacts of colonisation, and in fact exacerbates persistent disadvantage.

Aotearoa has a history of universal provision, and instances of central government providing funding with full autonomy are rare. It is under this model that we have seen decades of evidence of failure by the social services system, including more notable examples such as those who experienced abuse in state care, tamariki who were removed from their whānau and placed in unsafe environments, and culturally inappropriate health and medical treatments.

However, the current approach within the sector tends to be less centralised and more consultative (described next), and indeed there are several examples of models that are more or less decentralised, as we will describe over the next few pages.

Analysis

» Strengths

- Can deliver efficiencies through economies of scale.
- Works best when the service or intervention needed is clear, and the criteria for receiving services are homogenous at a national level.

» Limitations

- Results in services that are provider- rather than whānau-centred (i.e., greater focus on service provision than meeting the specific needs of whānau) with ineffective services rarely modified, scaled back, or shut down.
- Focus tends to be on efficiency without necessarily evaluating effectiveness of services, especially for cross-agency services.
- Can fail to deliver when needs of population groups vary at regional or local level.
- In some cases the services required do not yet exist or if they do, in insufficient quantities to meet demand.
- The focus is on transactions rather than building relationships and trust with the whole system.
- Resultantly, those with negative experiences with the system may at best lack trust in the system, and at worst feel culturally unsafe or harmed.
- Has historically failed to deliver equitable outcomes for māori and other groups, creating persistent disadvantage.

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Consultation

In recent decades, Aotearoa has shifted away from a purely centralised model, with increasing recognition and acknowledgement of the crown's Tiriti responsibilities.

As a result, there has been a shift toward engaging in consultation with iwi and mana whenua, especially in the social services sector; although this varies in extent and effectiveness; in part due to a lack of clarity within agencies' strategies in relation to their Tiriti obligations and responsibilities.

Decisions and power still remain centralised, with agencies representing the crown, rather than being delegated to iwi and hapū. Thus, consultation itself is not a substitute for the transfer of power or autonomy to mana whenua.

Indeed, Boulton and colleagues state³⁴:

"A genuine power-sharing relationship is fundamentally different to 'engagement' or 'consultation' in which Māori are permitted to express views, but the real decision-making power remains with the state."

Genuine consultation, which itself remains limited, means that at best māori are co-designers, rather than co-deciders. Thus, this model has significant constraints in helping us realise our articulated desired future state.

Analysis

» Strengths

- Seeks engagement with and input from tangata whenua and other groups in Aotearoa, with a view to influencing legislation, policies, and practices.

» Limitations

- Consultation itself can vary in the extent to which it can genuinely influence design and decision-making.
- The terms of engagement for consultation – including the timing and approach – are set by the crown, and decision-making rests solely with government.
- Power imbalance between crown and the parties it seeks to consult with (mana whenua or iwi, in this case) still remains, therefore limited in the extent to which it gives effect to Tiriti "partnership".

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Joint venture

The fragmented and the siloed way in which government agencies work have been repeatedly identified as a barrier for whānau navigating the social services system, and thus in accessing the support they need. These remnants of new public management are now increasingly under scrutiny, and with the advent of the recent Public Service Act 2020³⁵, we are starting to see a shift toward more 'joined up' and 'citizen-focused' services amongst government agencies within the public sector.

The Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence now known as Te Puna Aonui is a prime example of central government agencies partnering to collectively reduce family and sexual violence, – a complex, social issue that crosses the purview of multiple agencies – while also working to develop accountabilities for this.

This venture received a sizeable investment, and those involved have demonstrated considerable goodwill and commitment toward progressing harm reduction, including producing whole-of-government packages for Budgets 2019 and 2020.

However, an independent audit by the OAG³⁶ on the progress of this initiative has also identified that there have been significant pressures to deliver have resulted in:

- Business units working independently, rather than collaboratively;
- An over-reliance on contractors rather than drawing on the expertise, skills, and knowledge base of staff within agencies; and
- A lack of clarity on roles, accountabilities, and ownership.

The audit also identified issues with Te Puna Aonui's approach to partnering with māori and developing a shared national strategy an interim rōpu. In effect, this did not reflect a true partnership with māori, and there was no clarity around how this partnership would function in practice.

More broadly, it appeared that a failure to set out a clear action plan that guided the work of the Te Puna Aonui was a key shortcoming in achieving the collective objectives. In short, it is not operating as effectively as it needs to be.

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Joint venture

Two years later, despite the evidence from the first audit on how to make improvements, a second OAG audit³⁷ found that agencies were still working in silos, largely constrained by their own priorities and ways of doing things. In this report, the Controller and Auditor-General John Ryan states his "[concern] that, after nearly five years of agencies working together under new structures, Te Puna Aonui agencies have not made more progress in the way they operate."

Community partners and tangata whenua were still largely being excluded from decision-making processes. The report also identified a failure to use information gathered from monitoring and evaluation in improving systems. In short, there has been very little transformation in how public sector agencies work collaboratively as well as engage with local initiatives and communities.

Thus, while joint ventures may be effective in some aspects, they remain limited in their ability to demonstrate fundamental change to how agencies and the social services system work, often reverting instead to default modes of working. This is at odds with developing a

learning system. Similarly, diffusion of responsibility across agencies remains a major barrier to demonstrating accountability for delivering on improved outcomes.

This is because ultimately joined up approaches among government agencies are still top-down models that assume the necessary services exist and that the main challenge lies in their effective and efficient delivery. As we will show in sections 3.2 and 3.3, our evidence base tells us this isn't the case. Whānau preferences and needs therefore do not inform service design and delivery, and mana whenua and iwi input, where sought, does not necessarily reflect partnership or give meaningful effect to the principles of Te Tiriti.

Analysis

» Strengths

- Genuine cross-agency collaboration can be especially suited to complex social issues that span the remit of multiple agencies and sectors.

» Limitations

- Based on the inaccurate notion that required services both exist and are effective in addressing whānau needs. Manaaki Tairāwhiti's system analysis shows this is not the case.
- Diffusion of responsibility, along with a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities, can be a major impediment toward achieving collective objectives and demonstrating accountability.
- Success of joint ventures are only as good as the amount of resourcing, time, and commitment put in by individual agencies. Under pressure, these can revert back to the status quo of siloed, fragmented action and/or use of contractors.
- Joint ventures and coordination of services still only reflect operating models for government agencies, and do not mandate iwi voice in design or decision-making.
- Little evidence of the success of joint ventures to date, nor their ability to develop learning systems and make system-level improvements.
- The nature and extent of partnership with māori varies. Therefore, this can sometimes reflect top-down 'consultation' models outlined earlier, rather than genuine partnership.

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Place-Based Initiatives (PBIs) – Manaaki Tairāwhiti

PBIs were designed to improve outcomes for at-risk children and their whānau by empowering local sector leaders to develop solutions for issues within their communities. There are currently two PBIs in operation: Manaaki Tairāwhiti and the South Auckland Social Wellbeing Board, with the former being iwi-led and reflecting a greater degree of devolution on our continuum.

While the intent was for decision-making to be shifted to the local level, the 2019 PBI evaluation³⁸ identified a number of challenges which have hindered transformative change.

Manaaki Tairāwhiti is not a service provider, rather it is a test and learn initiative around better social service provision. After six years of operation we can say that we have found many ways to improve the system (see sections 2.3 and 3.3) We are however completely constrained in achieving that change by lack of local decision-making power. We can highlight and suggest but the inertia of the national system is immense.

Funding allocations and resourcing capacities restrict the number of whānau that PBIs can work with, and contracting specifications can limit their ability to be responsive to whānau needs. Additionally, funding delays and uncertainty of tenure can make it difficult for the PBIs to maintain momentum with whānau.

Elsewhere, it has been noted that the two PBIs have faced a disproportionate level of scrutiny whilst being allocated only a fraction of the billion-dollar budgets that conventional services have³⁹.

Therefore, current processes and systems are not set-up to enable holistic, whānau-centred ways of working, and this can override local innovation and responsiveness. The existing policy settings and structures also force vertical accountabilities whilst requiring the PBIs maintain horizontal collective action.

As such, this model does not go far enough to devolve funding and decision rights to local leaders (including iwi). In this way, PBIs are still operating within constrained environments and subject to many of the barriers encountered within central government agencies.

Analysis

» Strengths

- Can identify necessary changes and improvements.
- Enables local-led identification of whānau needs and delivery of assistance.
- Being place-based means solutions are tailored to the context of the region's needs and strengths.
- Local providers have a greater degree of flexibility in service provision than under centralised delivery.

» Limitations

- Constrained by national policies.
- Outsiders trying to improve something which we do not have authority to change.
- Uncertainty in tenure and funding can be a barrier to PBIs' long-term planning as well as to providers forming trust-based relationships between providers/agencies and whānau.
- Devolving funding and decision-making does not go far enough, and PBIs as well as providers have struggled to demonstrate long-term effectiveness of holistic, whānau-centred approaches to social services.
- Being 'place-based', the model is not infinitely scalable nor easily replicated across all regions, but lessons learned might be transferable and invaluable for other collectives.

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Commissioning boards

Although funding models have traditionally been underpinned by agency outputs rather than wellbeing outcomes, in 2021 the government committed to a new relational approach to social sector commissioning. This shift acknowledged that achieving better value services that support the aspirations of individuals, whānau, and communities requires meaningful, trusted relationships with providers and a commitment to the principles of Te Tiriti.

Around 22 government agencies and crown entities commission services. In 2020/2021 an estimated \$6 - 7 billion in social services were commissioned through nearly 19,000 arrangements (contracts, grants, or other) with NGOs. It is difficult to determine the exact number of contracted services within a region, as multiple agencies pour funding into local providers, and the terms and specifications of contracts themselves vary.

As a rough indicator, through MSD alone there are more than 600 contracts within the Tairāwhiti region to iwi and NGO providers. While relational commissioning is an improved way of contracting, the overall approach is still patchy and has limited transparency. It can also result in duplication of services as well as whānau falling through the cracks of the system, resulting in their needs being unmet.

A social services commission review also acknowledged that moving toward a fully relational approach will take time to ensure appropriate systems and supports are in place, with a six year Action Plan developed to achieve this.

This same review also identified a number of additional challenges, including that administrative requirements (i.e., reporting, monitoring, and auditing as well as time spent re-negotiating contracts) can be disproportionate to the amount and duration of funding, consuming a significant amount of provider resourcing and capacity that could be better spent on meeting real needs of whānau in real time.

A lack of longer-term continuity in contracting also makes it difficult for providers to have certainty about the future of their services, as well as plan for and invest in workforce development. These shorter contracts can also be a barrier to providers being able to develop meaningful and trust-based relationships with whānau.

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Commissioning boards

There are also additional challenges with designing and delivering services through commissioning, that have been identified by iwi:

- Contracting requirements are often counter to the “do whatever it takes” approach used by kaimahi to support whānau – sometimes this support is provided when kaimahi run into whānau at chance events or even the local dairy, but such interactions cannot easily be mapped onto narrow service specifications;
- Contracting systems also place “artificial boundaries” around who is considered a client; once again, this is counter to iwi approaches that focus on whole-of-whānau support;
- Contracts may also specify timeframes, thresholds, and outcomes that are counter to the approach used by iwi and the reality of whānau trajectories. For instance, Ngāti Porou have previously described their approach to supporting whānau “for life” not just during times of crises; and

- Finally, commissioning typically focuses on secondary and tertiary interventions whereas iwi are ideally placed to engage in preventative efforts and early engagement with whānau through services that may not exist yet or be known to agencies.

Thus, contracting requirements and metrics still reflect centralised systems to some extent, with the crown retaining power. At least within the Tairāwhiti context – where iwi and hapū are intimately familiar with whānau needs and well-positioned to meet these – relational commissioning does not deliver on our objectives.

Analysis

» Strengths

- In theory, grounded in the principles of Te Tiriti and emphasises self-determination for iwi, hapū, and whānau in achieving their aspirations. However, at present this is mainly in service delivery and appears less so in the governance and accountability of service provision. Thus, not fully the paradigm shift in terms of power sharing and genuine partnership with mana whenua.
- Supports locally-led and culturally appropriate solutions, with whānau needs at the forefront.
- An improved way of contracting (in terms of value and effectiveness).

» Limitations

- Contracts can vary in the extent to which they ‘devolve’ service delivery to iwi and NGO providers.
- Contract structures and mechanisms itself still constrain achievement of outcomes (e.g., improved whānau wellbeing) because contracts specify ‘inputs’ (funding) and ‘outputs’ (clients served).
- Contracts can create compliance burdens, while at the same time limiting stability and certainty for providers over the long term.
- Raises issues of privacy, consent, and record-keeping; all of which can be more effectively resolved through a single point of contact.
- Overall, still represents a piecemeal and siloed approach to meeting (some, but not necessarily all) whānau needs.

3.1 | Options analysis

Long list options: Devolution

The case for devolution has been made elsewhere throughout this roadmap (particularly in section 2.1). Thus, rather than re-litigate these here, we simply note that devolution itself can occur to varying extents ranging from devolution of services alone – such as through commissioning or via the PBIs described earlier – to full devolution.

For present purposes, we are talking about the devolution of funding, power, and systems design to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti. An NZIER report⁴⁰ outlining the way forward for the region has noted that this devolution needs to occur within a broader fundamental shift in the social services systems, entailing:

- A shift away from inputs and outputs to outcomes that help people live better lives;
- Empowering providers with the decision-making power and authority to do 'whatever it takes' to meet whānau needs and self-determination, within the established budget;

- Centering whānau voice in the design of service, since whānau demand is 'human shaped' and not 'service shaped'; and
- Ensuring that solutions are locally-shaped to meet local and regional priorities and needs, and are not centrally-determined.

Analysis

» Strengths

- Enables more tailored design and delivery of services, particularly for those with multiple, complex needs.
- Is more appropriate in addressing issues of equity, particularly in regions like Te Tairāwhiti that have persistent and intergenerational disadvantage.
- More likely to be effective in the longer-term at genuinely empowering whānau and improving their wellbeing, thereby reducing reliance and ongoing costs over the long term.
- Option best placed to give effect to iwi-crown partnerships and genuine power sharing.
- Recognises iwi and hapū are intimately familiar with whānau needs and better positioned to identify, assess, and respond to these than centrally-designed services.
- Enables self-determination of whānau, iwi, and hapū to design their own solutions that meet their aspirations.

» Limitations

- Tailored, needs-based services can pose affordability challenges, particularly for the communities most in need of such services.
- Services may be harder to scale without appropriate resourcing (e.g., financial investment, workforce development) and it can take time for improvements in wellbeing to be realised.
- Full devolution of services can come with some degree of political risk if not managed properly.
- Devolution may not be best suited to all contexts, regions, and services.

3.1 | Options analysis

Our assessment dimensions: Te Tiriti

As outlined in our desired future state, iwi in Te Tairāwhiti are aspiring toward self-determination and improved wellbeing in the region. Based on these objectives, we have evaluated our options against two relevant dimensions.

First, the extent to which each option represents a model of genuine crown-iwi partnership, thereby giving effect to the articles of Te Tiriti (outlined at right). This is because government and social sector leaders have consistently reaffirmed their commitment to working in partnership with iwi under Te Tiriti. Iwi and hapū leaders in Te Tairāwhiti have also repeatedly stated their intent to lead social service planning and decision-making at a local level. This model of partnership is both an espoused commitment by government and an aspiration of iwi in the region.

Second, the extent to which each option improves wellbeing (assessing both the delivery process and resulting outcome) for Tairāwhiti whānau. Recognising and giving effect to Te Tiriti – through crown-iwi partnerships – is central to improving intergenerational wellbeing for iwi, hapū, and whānau, as recognised in the Social Sector Commissioning: Sector Update⁴¹. Thus, our two assessment dimensions are intrinsically linked.

The articles of Te Tiriti are outlined at right. We describe our approach to assessing wellbeing on the following page, before laying out our Multi Criteria Analysis.

Te Tiriti Articles

- 1 Kawanatanga**
 Provision for the crown to **govern** over the land. Included in this provision is the obligation to **protect** māori interests.
- 2 Tino Rangatiratanga**
 Provision for iwi to exercise authority over their own affairs including the control of physical, cultural, and social resources. A key aspect is **iwi autonomy** (self-determination).
- 3 Ōritetanga**
 Provision that **guarantees equality** between māori and all other New Zealanders. As long as socio-economic disparities persist, this article is in breach.

Figure 16. The three articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

3.1 | Options analysis

Our assessment dimensions: Wellbeing

Achieving transformative changes in wellbeing within one generation means we need to look holistically at what contributes to whānau and community mauri ora. While we are yet to develop our specific approach to reflect and measure whānau wellbeing outcomes resulting from devolution to iwi (this will occur during the co-design and feasibility studies stages) one potential framework that is of high relevance to our objectives is the He Tohu Ora wellbeing framework developed by Trust Tairāwhiti⁴².

As shown below, there are six muka (strands) that represent aspirational wellbeing outcomes for Te Tairāwhiti. These muka are interdependent and complementary, capturing a holistic vision for regional wellbeing.

A key strength of this approach is that it has been developed within the Tairāwhiti context specifically, emerging out of direct community engagement and capturing the voices of those in the region. In this way it is both tailored to and grounded in the region.

This framework also broadly integrates Treasury's Living Standards Framework dimensions, and is an extension of what is becoming an increasingly common set of tools to measure wellbeing tools. Thus, other wellbeing frameworks could be substituted in our analysis, but we anticipate these will have similar results.

Work is also underway through Manaaki Tairāwhiti to develop a collaborative active research framework that focuses on

collecting and understanding whānau data, through a purpose-designed platform Urungi. Whānau voice, system response to needs, and barriers to the system performing effectively are collected (these are lead indicators).

This data supports working with whānau at the operational level and is used to improve services as soon as possible. In the longer term, it is intended that this data will form part of the evaluation process of the and devolved services, and will enable iwi to have a clearer picture of the system they are taking over as the devolution progresses. We anticipate iwi will also build up their own capabilities, measures, and policies around for evaluation over the medium to longer term.

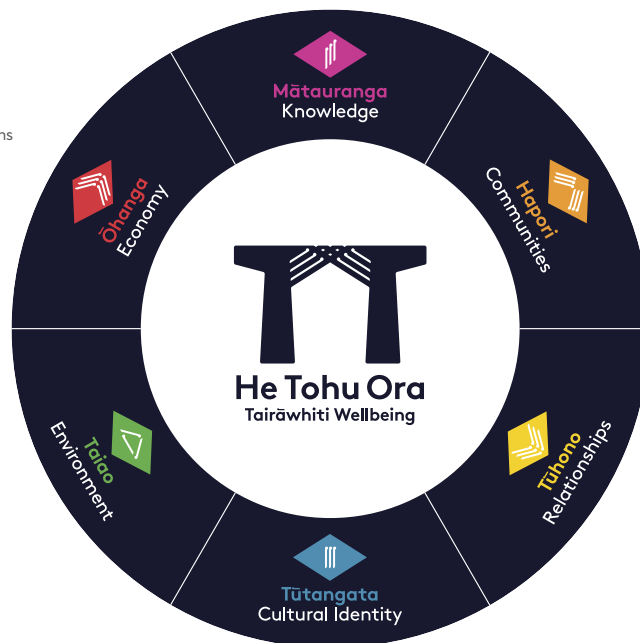
The ability for an individual to access knowledge and make informed choices about how to achieve their goals and live the kind of life they aspire to.

The ability for people to have the means to meet their everyday needs and participate in the economy, through paid and unpaid work.

The impact of the natural world and environmental quality on people's wellbeing.

The ability for individuals and communities to have self-determination, and have their voices be included in decision-making.

The connections between whānau, people, and the community, including feeling socially supported.



The sense of belonging, identity, and cultural connection people feel to Tairāwhiti and to the community.

Figure 17. He Rangitapu He Tohu Ora framework of wellbeing developed within the Tairāwhiti context.

3.1 | Options analysis

Describing our criteria

The table at right sets out how we have applied the criteria in our analysis, across each option. We use a gradation system to depict results, as shown below:

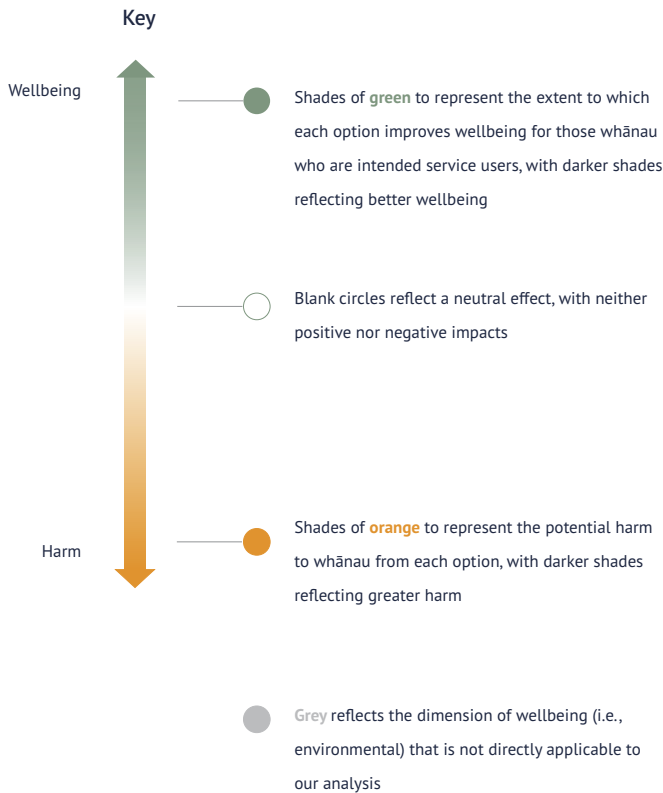


Figure 18. Key describing the gradation system we used to depict the results of our Multi Criteria Analysis.

Assessing the extent to which....	
Operating under a Tiriti partnership	
Kawanatanga	Māori interests are protected under existing governance structures
Tino rangatiratanga	There is iwi self-determination and autonomy over their own affairs
Ōritetanga	There are socio-economic disparities (inequalities) between māori and non-māori
Wellbeing outcomes	
Mātauranga Knowledge	Whānau are able to make informed choices about the assistance they receive during the delivery and as a result of the service provided, including having data sovereignty over their own information
Hapori Communities	Whānau are included in decision-making around the choice, design, and delivery of services, and the extent to which whānau self-determination is upheld during and as a result of the service
Tūhono Relationships	Whānau feel better connected and socially supported by service providers and others in their community, during the delivery and as a result of the assistance they have received
Tūtangata Cultural identity	Services reflect and uphold the cultural identity of whānau, and foster a sense of belonging, identity, and connection to the community during and as a result of the service
Taiao Environment	While we acknowledge the wellbeing of our taiao is inherently connected with the wellbeing of whenua, this dimension is not immediately relevant to our objectives and therefore we have excluded this in our analysis
Ōhanga Economy	Whānau are supported (during the delivery) and empowered to (as a result of the service) meet their everyday needs, by participating in the economy through paid and unpaid work

Figure 19. Descriptors of our assessment criteria.

3.1 | Options analysis

Options analysis

The output of our Multi Criteria Analysis is shown below.

As the analysis shows, options differ in the extent to which they effectively demonstrate partnership under Te Tiriti and improve whānau wellbeing, with full devolution of services to iwi being the option that comes closest to meeting all objectives.

However, there are also real strengths with the PBI and approaches from a wellbeing and Tiriti perspective, in addition to being readily deployable

models of delivering social assistance.

For these reasons, our analysis does not land us on a single option. Instead, we draw on the strengths of existing models – such as Manaaki Tairāwhiti’s approach as a PBI and the relational commissioning approach – that are already demonstrating impacts in terms of shifting the dial on wellbeing and being iwi-led.

However, a PBI such as Manaaki Tairāwhiti is not a demonstration of iwi mana motuhake, since considerable

power and resources remain with central government rather than iwi, hapū, or whānau. Relational commissioning is a step forward in the right direction, however the same limitations apply. Power and resources remain with central government.

In this way, our roadmap to devolution relies on transitioning across different pathways, at different timepoints, until the capabilities and capacity for iwi-led devolution of social services in Te Tairāwhiti is best placed to take effect.



Figure 20. Output of our Multi Criteria Analysis, showing which option(s) are most likely to meet our objectives.

3.1 | Options analysis

Our pathway to devolution

Rather than landing on a single immediate option, our analysis indicates strengths with the Manaaki Tairāwhiti and relational commissioning approaches that are already demonstrating success in terms of improving whānau wellbeing, as well as in being iwi-led. However, as iwi, tino rangatiratanga remains what we desire and what Te Tiriti promises.

While our vision is the devolution of social services to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti, this still requires considerable set-up in terms of resourcing and building capacity.

For these reasons, our pathway to devolution relies on transitioning across different pathways, at different timepoints, converging on full devolution of social services in Te Tairāwhiti once iwi capabilities and capacity are best placed to take effect.

PATHWAY TO DEVOLUTION

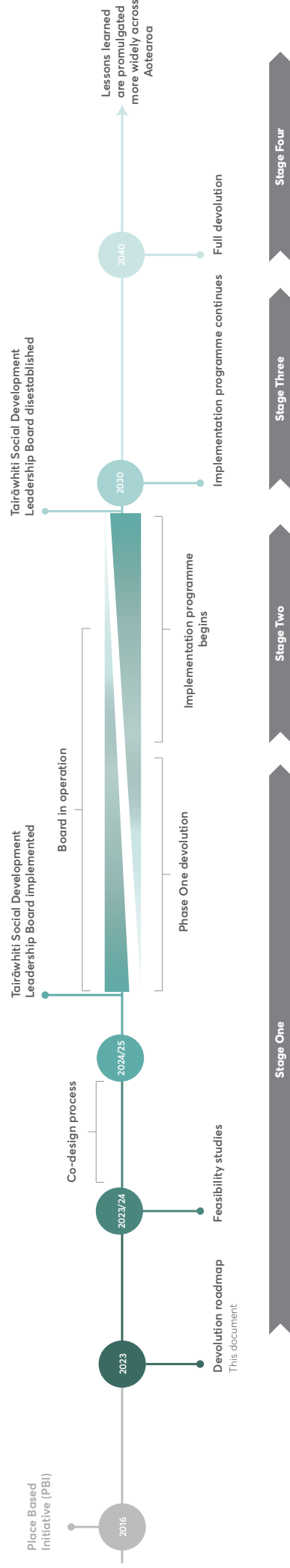


Figure 21. Our (simplified) pathway to devolution in Te Tairāwhiti.

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3.2

Assessing the state of social services



3.2 | The current state

The current state of social services

A high level assessment of the current state of social services in Aotearoa, against cabinet principles for social sector leadership and support.

» Persistent disadvantage

We describe and contextualise the causes of persistent disadvantage in Aotearoa.

88

> this discussion starts on page 88

» Failures in the current system

We detail the barriers within and failures of the current social services system.

90

> this discussion starts on page 90

» The benefits of eliminating disadvantage

We detail some indicative costs of persistent disadvantage and highlight the broader benefits of eliminating this disadvantage, to all of Aotearoa.

91

> this discussion starts on page 91

We unpacked our analysis in the previous section, demonstrating our reasoning for going down the path of social service devolution to iwi. In this current section we examine the counter-factual by assessing the current state of social services in Aotearoa, highlighting both challenges and barriers to change. This provides us with the impetus for action.

In a 2020 cabinet paper⁴³ 'Social Sector Leadership and Support' the government emphasised a renewed focus on improving social wellbeing, underpinned by a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and building genuine partnership with māori that would benefit all of Aotearoa. This approach to social wellbeing was also embedded within a set of principles, including:

- A strengths-based approach that centres whānau and collective wellbeing;
- More inclusive ways to measure wellbeing;
- Services that respond to people's specific needs; and
- Selecting the intervention option(s) that deliver the best possible outcomes, while continually learning about what is and isn't working.

These principles act as a framework to guide the delivery of social services in Aotearoa, and offer a means of assessing the current state of service delivery, enabling us to identify where there is serious need for improvement.

3.2 | The current state

Persistent disadvantage in Aotearoa

Persistent disadvantage continues to remain an issue in Aotearoa, with approximately 724,000 New Zealanders (17% of our population) experiencing persistent disadvantage in 2013 and 2018, as highlighted in the recent Productivity Commission report⁴⁴ A Fair Chance for All. This figure is likely to underestimate the true magnitude of the issue, as the reality is likely to be far worse for many who were impacted by Covid-19 related job and income losses, natural disasters, the housing crisis, inflation, and rising costs of living.

Persistent disadvantage is experienced as the absence of mauri ora in terms of exclusion, deprivation, and/or income poverty. 'Persistent' implies this disadvantage is ongoing for two or more years, sometimes over a lifetime and across generations.

– NZ Productivity Commission

We know persistent disadvantage can hold people back from fulfilling their needs and aspirations – for themselves, their whānau, and future generations. We also know vulnerability to disadvantage can compound, making it hard to escape the cycle across generations of a whānau and community.

Indeed, we can see geographic trends where disadvantage clusters by location: Northland and Te Tairāwhiti in particular have the greatest proportion of the population experiencing disadvantage. Not co-incidentally, these regions also tend to have large proportions of the population who identify as māori.

Although the causes of disadvantage are complex and multi-factorial, the fact that globally Indigenous groups in colonised societies tend to experience consistently worse health, social, and economic outcomes tell us something about what underpins this disadvantage.

Beginning with the seminal Pūao-te-Ata-tu report⁴⁵ published in 1988, and bookended more recently by the Human Rights Commission report⁴⁶ on racism, there have been numerous state-commissioned reviews and reports investigating the failure of state service provision for certain groups including māori; pacific peoples; and those with multiple, complex needs.

These findings collectively point to the role of colonisation and racism in creating and perpetuating the inequities experienced by māori, as explored briefly in the sidebar.

» Colonisation

Colonising strategies enacted through the dispossession of land, banning of te reo, and forced urbanisation through assimilation policies over centuries have eroded māori ability for self-determination as a right afforded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As a result, māori have been disconnected from protective cultural factors such as support structures of whānau, hapū, and iwi, further eroding their potential. We therefore refer to colonisation as both historic and ongoing.

» Racism

While interpersonal and internalised racism continue to remain significant issues, institutional racism represents one of the most insidious in perpetuating negative outcomes for māori. Here, power imbalances embedded into our institutional structures and processes make it difficult to enact any meaningful and systematic change.

A recent and notable example of institutional racism was highlighted through the 2019 Waitangi Tribunal investigation into inequities in primary health care. The resultant Hauora report found empirical evidence of institutional racism against māori, in relation to māori primary health organisations receiving inadequate funding; being under-resourced; being under-represented in design of services, decision-making, and governance; failure by the crown to clarify and meet Tiriti obligations; as well as being subjected to greater levels of monitoring, reporting, and auditing.

Additionally, the report identifies failures by the crown to deliver on accountability for long-standing māori health inequities as being a "serious breach" of Te Tiriti.

3.2 | The challenge we're addressing

Why the current system is failing whānau with complex, intergenerational needs

The issue of persistent disadvantage itself is not new, nor are attempts aimed at addressing it. Indeed, every major review since Te Pūao-te-Āta-tu has emphasised the same messaging: that issues of disparities for māori are of critical importance, and that effective responses will require urgent and transformational system-level change.

However, these have been largely sector- or service-specific actions, with varying levels of success. There is also little evidence to date that whole-of-government reforms have necessarily been effective in improving inequalities.

While recent reforms in the public service system have seen shifts toward more collaborative and joint forms of working, these efforts have been slow to shift the dial and inequities continue to persist. Further, where improvements have been made through policy initiatives or legislation, the benefits do not accrue equitably for māori.

The figure at right provides a high-level overview of the barriers that constrain our public management and social services systems from responding in ways that help individuals and whānau realise their potential and achieve mauri ora.

This is despite the fact that total social service expenditure has increased eighteen-fold between 1980 (\$3.9 billion in present day terms) and 2021 (\$73.6 billion)¹, and represented

around 47.7% of total government expenditure in 2020 against 38.5% in 1990.

Thus, spending on social services in both dollar value and as a proportion of total expenditure has increased significantly, reflecting an increasing recognition and commitment by successive governments toward minimising harmful social outcomes.

Yet, we have decades of evidence in the form of government-initiated reviews and inquiries that point to the fact that while the current

state is working for some, our social sector services are failing to address complex, multiple, and intergenerational needs.

In particular, our current social services system is failing māori. Returning to what has been set out in the framework for social wellbeing outlined in the 2020 cabinet paper Social Sector Leadership and Support, we therefore need to proceed with the intervention option that will deliver the best possible outcome – underpinned by a commitment to honouring iwi partnership under Te Tiriti.

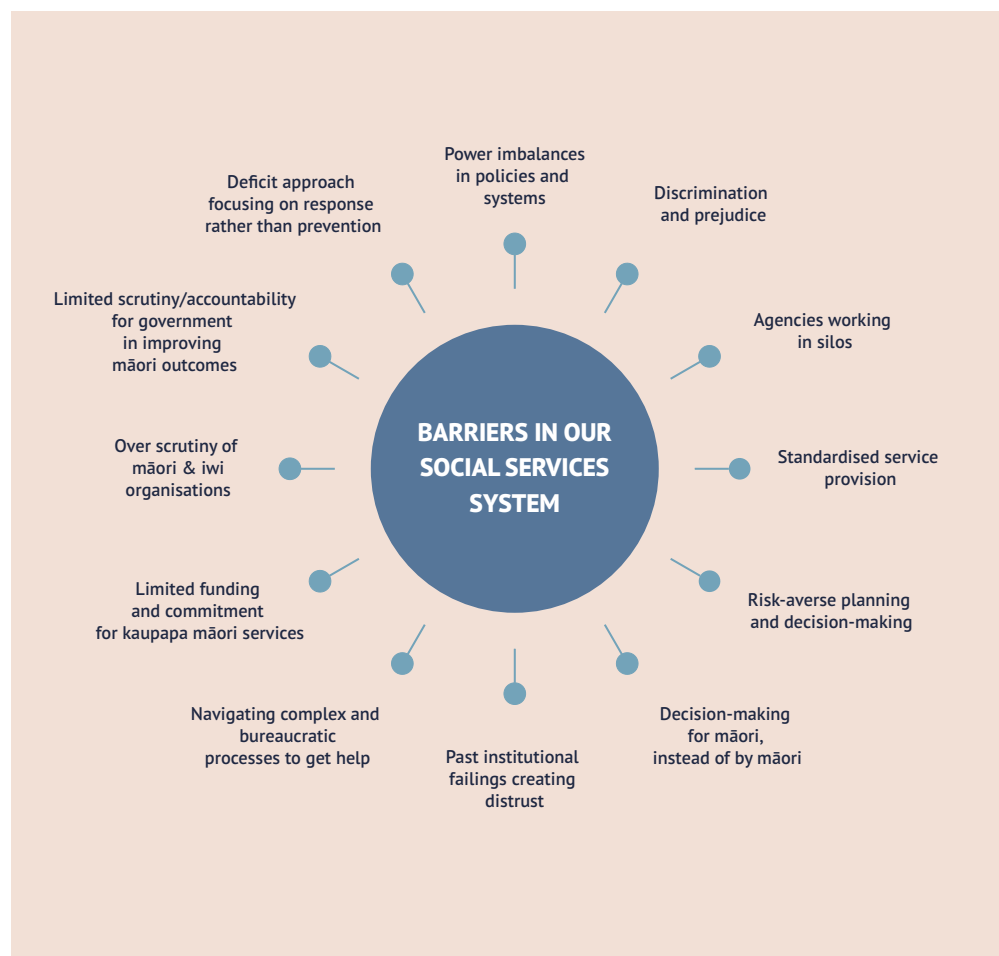


Figure 22. Institutional barriers preventing system change and equitable social outcomes.

¹ Down from \$76.6 billion in 2019, pre-pandemic

3.2 | The benefits of eliminating persistent disadvantage

There are significant economic, cultural, and social wellbeing benefits to be gained for all of Aotearoa

Persistent disadvantage represents a significant loss of opportunity for those who are unable to fully support themselves and their whānau; participate meaningfully in their communities; contribute toward the wider economy; and generate prosperity for successive generations. There is also a considerable toll on individuals and whānau who are unable to realise their aspirations for current and future generations. While the social, cultural, and spiritual impacts are difficult to quantify, some economic estimates of the cost of disadvantage include:

- \$5 billion annual cost of not providing equitable primary health care for Māori under five years and between 45-64 years;
- \$36 million annual cost, with nearly 6,300 hospitalisations and over 36,600 nights in hospital, of living in cold and damp, mouldy, and/or overcrowded homes;
- \$7.21 billion annual cost of victimisation due to family harm; and
- \$8 billion annual cost of child poverty, estimated in 2011.

These are substantial and unsustainable economic costs to all New Zealanders. They also represent a considerable

negative investment – i.e., funding that results in compounding harmful outcomes for Māori – representing the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff.

On the other hand, as noted in the recent Productivity Commission report⁴⁷ there are the social and economic benefits that are likely to accrue across different wellbeing domains and at different levels: individual, whānau, community, and national. These benefits are illustrated in the figure below, across the four domains of Treasury's He Ara Waiora model of wellbeing. Accordingly, whānau thrive when they:

- Possess a strong sense of identity and belonging (mana tuku iho);
- Participate and connect with their communities, fulfilling their collective rights and obligations (mana tautuutu);
- Have the capability to decide on and realise their aspirations within their own unique circumstances (mana āheinga); and
- Are empowered to grow sustainable, intergenerational prosperity (mana whanake).

Thus, as a nation we stand to gain considerably from eliminating persistent disadvantage.

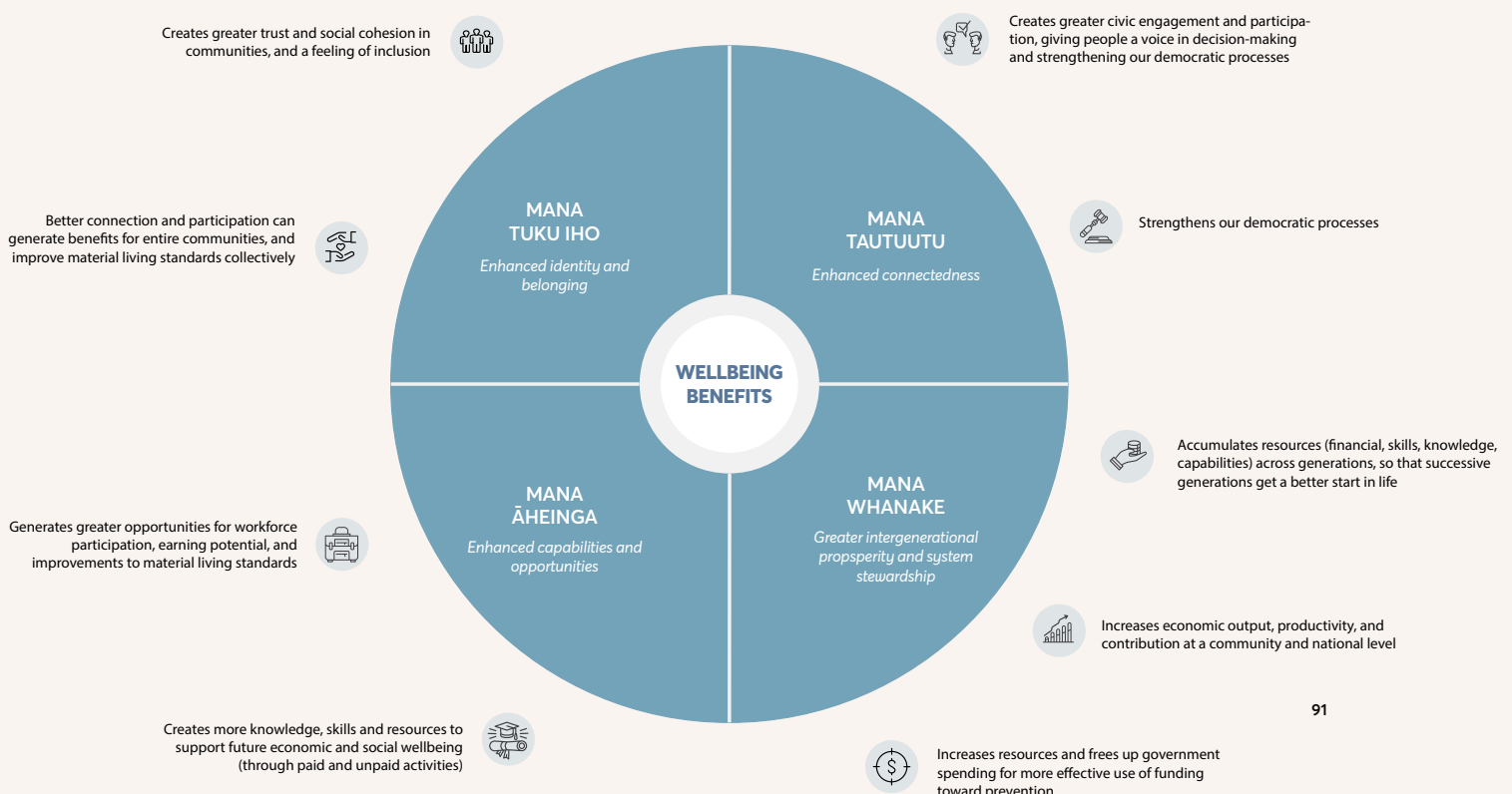


Figure 23. Wellbeing benefits of eliminating persistent disadvantage for all of Aotearoa.

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3.3

The strategic context



3.3 | The strategic context

An overview of Te Tairāwhiti

We now turn to the Tairāwhiti context – the focus of the proposed devolved transformative investment. We begin with an overview of iwi (and rūnanga) ambitions and initiatives, and evidence our reasoning for Te Tairāwhiti being the ideal test case for social service devolution to iwi.

» Overview of the region and whenua

Contextual overview of the region and mana whenua (four local iwi).

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> this discussion starts on page 95

» Our evidence base

Why the system is failing whānau in Te Tairāwhiti, as well as barriers to system-level change.

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» Proven track record and capability

The evidence for maturity and capability in the region, as well as the challenge ahead.

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> this discussion starts on page 106



3.3 | The strategic context

An overview of Te Tairāwhiti

Located in the northeastern corner of Te Ika-a-Māui, Te Tairāwhiti is home to a relatively small population of approximately 52,100 people (1% of New Zealand’s population), with around three-quarters residing in Gisborne city, and the remaining gathered in small townships and rurally. Its remote location also means the region is relatively isolated from adjoining regions.

Te Tairāwhiti is demographically quite different from the rest of the country, having deep māori roots and history. Around 53% of the population identify as māori, compared to the national average of 17%, with many being fluent in te reo and having strong iwi affiliations. Indeed, there are 71 marae across the rohe.

The region also has one of the largest proportions of the youth population in the country, with 39% under 25 years old, while simultaneously having a high proportion over the age of 64 years (16.2%). Resultantly, the proportion of the economically active population is smaller, with a lower median income of \$83,000 compared to the national median of \$103,000.

This smaller economic base generates additional financial pressures for the region and consequently Te Tairāwhiti, along with Northland, consistently experiences persistent disadvantage, across both the 2013 and 2018 census.

The impacts of colonisation and land dispossession continue to be strongly felt within the region, and this is reflected in the 2018 New Zealand Deprivation Index⁴⁸, which assesses Te Tairāwhiti as being one of the most deprived regions in the country; ranking 62 out of 67 nationally. While nearly two-thirds (65%) of the region’s population

is living in deciles 8-10, deprivation is further pronounced by ethnicity, with approximately 77% of māori living in deciles 8-10.

High levels of economic deprivation can result in complex and challenging needs being unmet, impairing both whānau and collective wellbeing in the region. It is also the biggest barrier toward improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequity.

Te Tairāwhiti continues to grapple with broader challenges such as poorer health outcomes; a shortage of housing and accommodation options across the continuum, but most notably emergency and crisis housing options; high rates of addiction; family violence, and child wellbeing issues. These are specific strategic priority areas for Manaaki Tairāwhiti, and as described previously, a significant amount of work is already underway to develop and deploy local-led, tailored solutions.

Regional deprivation and affordability challenges make it challenging for service providers to deliver services that meet whānau’s complex and interconnected needs. Additionally, the relative remoteness of the region sometimes necessitates that residents – especially those living rurally – travel considerable distances, sometimes out of the region, to access particular services.

3.3 | The strategic context

An overview of Te Tairāwhiti

Recent weather events have exacerbated and made more urgent the need to rethink how we do things in Te Tairāwhiti. There has been significant and extensive damage to the roading network, especially rurally, with repair costs estimated between \$465 to \$725 million and likely taking up to four years. On top of the devastating loss of lives, there has been unprecedented damage to property and land. Regional farm damage from Cyclone Gabrielle is estimated at \$80 million.

Many whānau have also been displaced from their homes. Around 11 properties have been red stickered and a further 170 have been yellow stickered, in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle alone. The most recent heavy rain event in June saw a further 11 houses being red stickered and 11 yellow stickered. There are also the environmental costs and impacts of silt, slash, and debris removal that.

These impacts continue to be felt today, highlighting the region's vulnerability to future weather events and the impacts of climate change. Our approach to recovery needs to incorporate resilience for our region and for our communities, as we build back better.

Te Tairāwhiti represents a culturally rich and highly connected region in Aotearoa with wellbeing practices that are part and parcel of everyday lives for whānau in

Mana whenua

There are four iwi in the Tairāwhiti region:

- Ngāti Porou (estimated population of around 11,985)⁴⁹;
- Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki (estimated population of 2,550)⁵⁰;
- Rongowhakaata (estimated population of around 1,854)⁵¹; and
- Ngāi Tāmanuhiri (estimated population of 714)⁵².

Iwi are organised into two rūnanga.

Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou (TRONPnui) represents the interests of Ngāti Porou, while **Te Rūnanga a Tūranganui a Kiwa (TROTAK)** collectively represents Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata, and Ngāi Tāmanuhiri. Three iwi are post-settlement, with the fourth (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki's) imminent.

Further detail about each rūnanga is provided on the following pages.

* All regional population estimates based on data from 2013 Census.

the region. In many aspects, it is unique in its isolation, demography, and in its potential for transformative change under a devolved approach to social services.

Programmes of delivery by iwi, for iwi (see section 2.3) are creating a generation of astute whānau and hapū leaders in Te Tairāwhiti who are strongly connected to whānau marae and hapū, and are confident in te reo me ōna tikanga. As we have detailed in earlier sections (2.1 and 2.2), in re-framing the

aforementioned challenges via a strengths-based approach Te Tairāwhiti is positioned as the ideal test case for improving regional wellbeing.

3.3 | Iwi aspirations and programmes of work

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Porou

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Porou, previously Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou (TRONPnui) is the mandated iwi organisation representing the collective interests of all Ngāti Porou; supporting and advocating for their needs as well as those within the wider East Coast district.

Established in 1987 under its own Act of Parliament, the rūnanga has developed out of a history of self-determination and mana motuhake for the Ngāti Porou people. The Trust – comprising elected representatives from each Rohenga Tipuna – provides strategic governance over its subsidiaries, while the corporate services arm provides operational support.

The rūnanga's purpose is to provide stewardship for its people – enabling them to realise their hopes and aspirations, while upholding their mana and rangatiratanga.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Porou is also involved in the delivery of primary health; community housing, as a registered Community Housing Provider (CHP); and social support services to Ngāti Porou whānau and East Coast communities. These services are broadly covered under the following umbrellas:

» Housing

The rūnanga has been working within the housing sector for more than 20 years, ensuring that whānau have access to decent and affordable housing

that matches their needs.

This includes a programme of work under their housing strategy including providing support and guidance for those who need housing assistance; home ownership and papakāinga workshops; provision of social and transitional housing; practical advice on valuations, legal matters, and insurance; as well as advocacy for housing needs.

The rūnanga also has medium- and longer-term aspirations for mixed-use housing development, which will include public housing, progressive home ownership, and affordable homes, and this work is currently in the pipeline.

» Whānau services

A wide range of social services provided through Whānau Oranga aimed at enhancing the quality of life and socio-cultural status of whānau, with a long-term goal of improving health, housing, and jobs.

These include services aimed at supporting tamariki and rangatahi within their whānau and schools; parent support programmes; skills-based support to enhance employment outcomes; family harm programmes; justice-based services that provide pathways to recovery and long-lasting change; community gym and nutrition services; as well as housing support services offering emergency and social housing for clients registered through Work and Income.

» Education

A diverse work programme run by the Mātauranga team aimed at empowering Ngāti Porou whānau, marae, and hapū to participate in opportunities and make informed choices about their lives. These include providing learning support and trades training, as well as offering tertiary education grants and iwi and national scholarships.

» Culture

This arm of services supports the continuation of the unique language, history, and tikanga of Ngāti Porou through opportunities for participation in forums, festivals, and hui; hosting and facilitating community events; as well as reinforcing and sustaining the marae.

» Health

A subsidiary of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Porou Hauora is a primary health organisation that serves more than 10,000 enrolled users through the provision of integrated health, development, and support services. Operating across 7 community clinics and a hospital in Te Puia Springs, services provided include primary health care; health promotion; public health and community nursing; home support; dental; allied health; mental health; hospital-based services; elderly health services; and palliative care.

3.3 | Iwi aspirations and programmes of work

Te Rūnanga a Tūranganui a Kiwa

Te Rūnanga a Tūranganui a Kiwa (TROTAK) is the mandated iwi authority representing the collective interests of three iwi: Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata, and Ngāi Tāmanuhiri.

The legal entity, formed in 1985, facilitates iwi realising their social, economic, political, and cultural aspirations. Elected trustees provide the strategic leadership and governance of the entity, while the corporate services arm supports governance and management of the organisation.

The rūnanga's vision has always been, and remains, acquiring:

- Tino rangatiratanga;
- Social welfare and economic prosperity; and
- Recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi by the crown and local community.

To this end, TROTAK delivers a range of social, health, education, and cultural services to the people of Tūranganui a Kiwa, including:

» Housing

The rūnanga is currently leading an iwi social housing project in the Tairāwhiti region aimed at benefiting a total of 53 whānau. This \$895,000 project, funded through the He Kūku Ki Te Kāinga fund will deliver papakāinga housing as well as urgent housing condition assessments for those whānau with highest housing quality improvement needs.

TROTAK is also a CHP under the Tūranganui-a-Kiwa Housing Ltd entity, having previously achieved transitional housing provider status. The rūnanga have further aspirations to develop housing in the region as part of their CHP application, and are working with the relevant agencies to progress these ambitions.

» Tūranga Social Services

TROTAK is involved in a broad range of social service provisions through Tūranga Iwi Social Services, including: Maatua Whāngai whānau-centred care, youth justice fresh start programmes, youth development programmes, supported bail, crisis counselling, and family harm prevention and education programmes.

Since 2020, the rūnanga has also been delivering the Whakapono Whānau Programme as part of a \$3.9 million contract with the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment. This intervention is aimed at reducing drug use within small communities, with the aim of enhancing community resilience and transitioning individuals into employment or training over the long term.

» Health Services

In 1997 the Rūnanga also established a separate company, Tūranga Health, to continue the provision of health and wellness services for communities within the boundaries of the three Tūranga iwi.

Services include primary health and general practice, māmā and pēpi programmes, smoking cessation, mental health, support, kaumātua programmes facilitating elderly wellbeing, community programmes for drug problems, physical activity programmes, and even workplace wellness programmes which offer on-the-job health checks. Through the Vanessa Lowndes Centre, Tūranga Health also supports individuals with physical, mental, or intellectual disabilities into employment.

» Education

TROTAK also has an established education arm through Tūranga Ararau; the iwi tertiary education provider for the Tūranganui a Kiwa rohe. Programmes offered include farming, forestry, aquaculture, teaching, adult community education short courses, and te reo māori.

Alongside education programmes, Tūranga Ararau also offers numerous pathways and services that support employment outcomes, such as māori trade training to support and retain māori in employment. There is also a dedicated youth service to advise and support rangatahi into higher education or employment.

» Culture

The entity owns and operates Te Reo Irirangi o Tūranganui-a-kiwa, or Tūranga FM, a radio station with the primary aim of preserving and promoting māori culture and revitalising te reo māori.

3.3 | Our evidence base

Social services landscape in Te Tairāwhiti

Over the next few pages, we detail our evidence base for why current systems are failing at a local level (and within the context of Tairāwhiti’s needs), as well as the track record for regional capability and delivery.

Manaaki Tairāwhiti recently commissioned a piece of work by the NZIER examining central government social spending within Te Tairāwhiti⁵³. The report used an expenditure based approach* to estimate regional spending for the period June 2017 to 2022, across seven categories:

- Education;
- Health;
- Housing;
- Justice;
- Māori Development, including Whānau Ora;
- Oranga Tamariki; and
- Social Development

The primary purpose of this work was to identify the quantum of expenditure that could be devolved from central government agencies to iwi and iwi-led collectives, such as Manaaki Tairāwhiti, in providing locally-developed whānau-centred services tailored to specific needs. In particular, using a fit-for-purpose methodology means that the findings are robust estimates of spending within Te Tairāwhiti specifically, rather than estimates made on a national basis.

* With the exception of housing (where both capital and operating costs were included), only operational expenditure has been included. Additional administrative expenditure associated with provision of ministerial services and policy advice has also been excluded, where identifiable.

High-level estimates of spending across seven categories or sectors are provided in the table at right. Cumulatively, this yields an annual spend of \$1.174 billion, with a sizeable portion being spent on transfers or benefits.

While the NZIER estimate of \$1.174 billion sheds some light on regional spending, we recognise the government does invest considerably more in social services in the region – for instance, through national-level transfer payments such as superannuation and spending on other public goods. However, the nature of government appropriation for different agencies means it is difficult to get a consolidated picture of this spending currently. Indeed, because of the way the Public Finance Act 1989 and the existing appropriation system is set up, it is difficult to report in one place the spending (and outcomes or results of) collaborative working⁵⁴. We are therefore unable to source the exact figures on spending, nor the precise number of contracts, in the region.

We do know however, that local commissioning through iwi providers and NGOs represents only a small proportion of the total regional social services spend: an estimated \$50 million is allocated across 92 contracts to iwi and NGO providers and direct agency services in the region. Despite the sizeable number of contracts, this is but a small fraction of the total spend in the region.

To truly give effect to a ‘place-based’ solution, we need to know the exact size of the potential

services to be devolved from appropriate agencies so we can set up and appropriately fund a new ‘system’ for social services in Te Tairāwhiti (see section 2.2). As part of our broader case for devolution therefore, there will be a need for change in how public finances are managed – as well as changes to the relevant legislation, including the Finance Act – to truly give effect to a local joined up ‘place-based’ solution. This will fall under the work stream of setting up an interim .

Nonetheless, at present we can conclude that there is a potential \$1.174 billion that could be devolved to iwi for social service commissioning within Te Tairāwhiti for alternate delivery models.

Sector	Operating expenditure (\$ million)
Education	144
Health	497
Housing	4.6
Justice	187
Social welfare	11
Transfer payments	330
TOTAL	1,174

Table 1. Estimated government social spending in Te Tairāwhiti across specific votes.

3.3 | Our evidence base

Whānau demand for social services in Te Tairāwhiti

Having gleaned an estimate of central government spending on social services in Te Tairāwhiti, we now turn to the demand for social support in the region.

Manaaki Tairāwhiti has been methodically collecting three sets of data from navigators, Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harekeke, and MSD⁵⁵. The data captures both staff and client perspectives, beginning in 2019, and evidences systems performances from a whānau point of view. In essence, these metrics reflect how the system is working for whānau, capturing what matters most to whānau. Cumulatively, this has produced 8,293 observations, of which 7,090 represent whānau voice.

Findings across two key areas are highlighted here. First, we look at the landscape of social service demand to gain a sense of the types of needs in the region, as well as whether these are being addressed effectively. Next, we look to the barriers encountered by whānau, in seeking the support they need.

» Whānau needs and demands for social support

Based on the data sets in 2022, top level insights show evidence of:

- A significant portion of whānau needs relating to financial assistance and housing demands, varying in nature and urgency;
- Child wellbeing featuring directly and indirectly in whānau demands – and tamariki often being the primary motivation for seeking help – indicating the importance of a whole-of-system whānau-based approach;

- The intersecting nature of demands, most commonly a high demand for help with housing and addiction, pointing to an intersection across Manaaki Tairāwhiti's key result areas;
- Many whānau having multiple, complex demands, which some parts of the social services system are unable to meet;
- At least a third of whānau encountering barriers in the system and not having their needs met;
- A small proportion of whānau having to wait between three months to a more than a year to have their needs resolved, which can not only deepen the initial need but generate additional interrelated needs; and
- The system not always addressing underlying causes of whānau demand, resulting in many whānau returning with multiple, complex needs.

Further, a review of the system improvement methodology⁵⁶ points to a large portion of the aforementioned social service spending in Te Tairāwhiti being directed at responding to whānau needs at multiple points in time and through different agencies, rather than toward prevention and addressing the root cause in the first instance.

This can have a multiplying effect and generate 'failure demand' with whānau presenting to the system several times because their needs have not been fully met in the first instance and deepened over time. For instance, a study of the UK public sector context found that real demand for most services is not actually increasing; rather, Vanguard analysis⁵⁷ estimated failure demand accounted for around 80% of the health and social services demand.

3.3 | Our evidence base

Whānau demand for social services in Te Tairāwhiti

Failure demand often arises due to a lack of understanding around local needs and a short-term focus on cost-containment. The data from whānau voice clearly identifies a large amount of waste work that systems have generated, in order to respond to whānau demand. Whānau do not get the help they need when they need it, and therefore cycle through the system – in some cases, across generations.

Ultimately, this results in costly duplication of services ("five cars in the driveway"), unmet needs, provision of services with limited value, increased longer-term costs of responding to escalated needs, and whānau dependency on services over time.

Thus, while it is difficult to accurately quantify the level of demand for social services in Te Tairāwhiti, we do know that whānau needs are not always being met effectively. The Tairāwhiti 'way of working' seeks to address these barriers and continuously improve based on our evolving understanding of the barriers.

Work in this space is ongoing, with the Manaaki team recently developing Urungi – a purpose-designed platform for frontline staff to capture whānau needs and barriers encountered, in real time. The intent with is that insights from this data will inform social sector leaders of areas requiring urgent action and system improvement. The point of collecting whānau voice data is to identify what is and isn't working within our sector and systems, from a whānau perspective, and thus, what needs to change. We therefore turn to the barriers that prevent whānau needs from being addressed.

3.3 | Our evidence base

Barriers to whānau needs being met in Te Tairāwhiti

» Barriers encountered by whānau

In addition to looking at whānau needs, we must also understand the specific barriers within the social service system. This is because different whānau may encounter different barriers for the same need, and whānau supported by navigators have often had experiences being turned away by agencies due to restrictive eligibility criteria. These experiences, along with repeated failure of the system to meet whānau needs, can create high levels of distrust and cause whānau to disengage altogether from seeking assistance.

The previously mentioned whānau insights report identified the varying barriers whānau experience whilst navigating the system. As the diagram below shows, these barriers vary along two dimensions:

- How frequently they arise
- How difficult they are to resolve

Thus, some barriers are less common but harder to resolve (e.g., previous bad experiences or poor relationships with agencies and criteria barriers) while others are more common but easier to navigate (e.g., those related to communication or process accessibility).

Both types of barriers need to be addressed in order to meet whānau needs effectively and in a timely manner. Taken together, the evidence suggests that whānau in Te Tairāwhiti have particular sets of complex and sometimes intersecting needs for social support, but these unfortunately are not always met.

Further, the system is designed to respond to needs rather than proactively tackle the root cause of these needs – i.e., persistent disadvantage – meaning whānau become entrenched in a pattern of relying on help rather than being empowered with the self-determination and capability to meet their own aspirations.

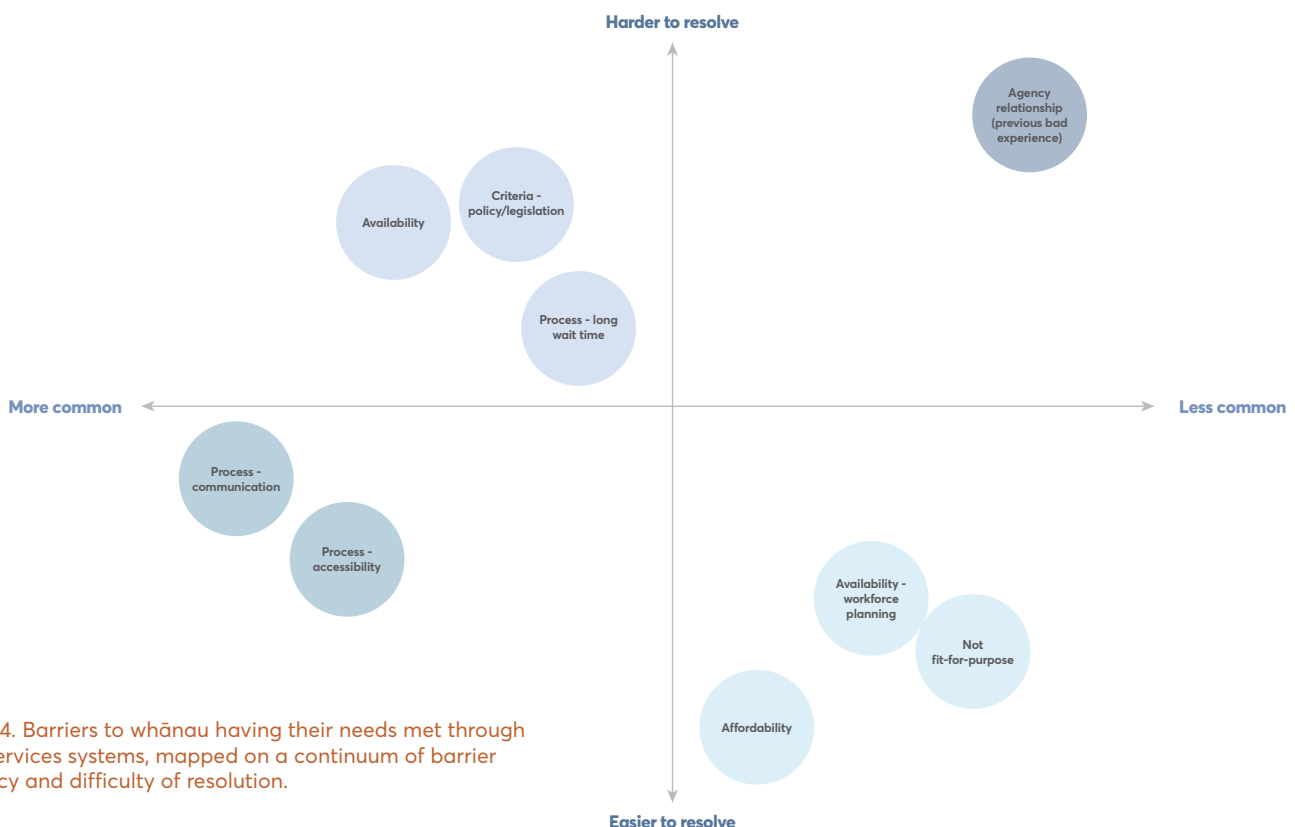


Figure 24. Barriers to whānau having their needs met through social services systems, mapped on a continuum of barrier frequency and difficulty of resolution.

3.3 | Our evidence base

System-level barriers that constrain change

Having examined the barriers encountered by whānau trying to navigate the social services system, we now turn to the system itself. For over five years, Manaaki Tairāwhiti has worked with agencies to implement and support SI-informed interventions. This involved training in specific SI methodology, supported by the MSD Better Every Day coaches. Agencies and organisations involved in this SI process include:

- Corrections – the Gisborne office of Probation services;
- MSD – the Work and Income call centre; and
- Te Awatea, a family violence initiative arising out of Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke (Tairāwhiti police/iwi family violence response).

Recently, Manaaki Tairāwhiti commissioned a review⁵⁸ investigating whether this SI methodology had yielded any improvements. Two key top-level findings from this review are detailed below and overleaf.

» Barriers at the system level persist

First, the SI methodology highlighted a number of barriers to the social services system changing. These have been discussed in section 3.2 and include:

- Agencies and community-based organisations operating in silos;
- Central government focus on crisis intervention rather than prevention;
- Staff responding to agency rather than client need; and
- A lack of local autonomy.

3.3 | Our evidence base

System-level barriers that constrain change

» The SI methodology is constrained

Second, the SI methodology itself is somewhat constrained in its ability to make significant changes to the system without a fundamental shift in the way government agencies currently operate (in terms of principles, ways of working, and deliverables). Nonetheless, it had value in improving local internal and cross-agency processes. Specifically, this enabled participating agencies to identify barriers to change, acknowledge the need for whānau voice to be centred, increase collaboration, and create a common vocabulary.

Although other inquiries into the social services system have largely identified similar barriers, there is still the underlying assumption that the client's "inability" to navigate services is the problem to be overcome – see for example, the Productivity Commission's⁵⁹ client typology (figure 25) framing clients capacity as the issue, rather than the system not meeting their needs.

While the desired state is still to move as many whānau into quadrant B as possible, a more productive re-framing of the issue might be to look at what needs to change within the system. As figure 26 overleaf shows, this requires reducing the system complexity and increasing system capacity and coverage.

Effective system change will therefore require leadership to empower the workforce to respond to whānau voice at the earliest opportunity, and to expanded coverage of service, to ensure as many whānau can be moved into quadrant F.

Taken together, these findings reiterate the need for wider system-level change in our social services sector as already detailed in previous state-commissioned reviews and reports. However, they also point to the extent to which Manaaki Tairāwhiti – operating in its current PBI framework – is constrained by the somewhat siloed system that oversees it.

3.3 | Our evidence base

System-level barriers that constrain change

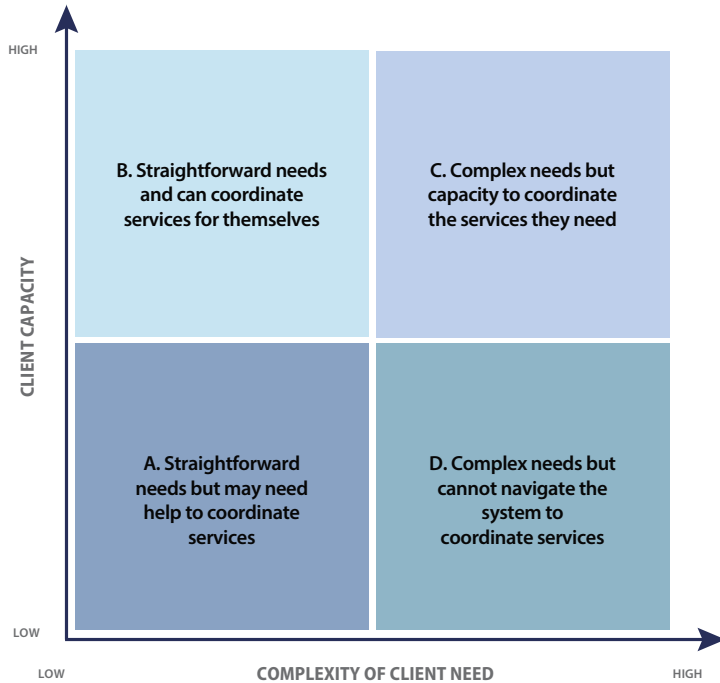


Figure 25. Productivity Commission’s client typology based on complexity of need and capacity to navigate the system (client deficit focus).

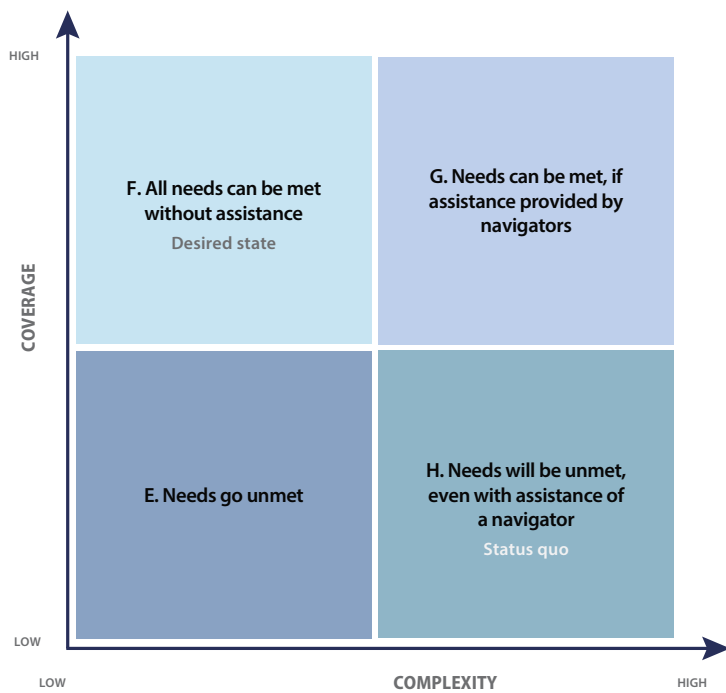


Figure 26. Proposed model based on need for clients to navigate complexity and capable workforce to enact bottom-up system change (system complexity focus).

3.3 | The strategic context

Proven track record and maturity

We now look at the evidence for the effectiveness of Manaaki Tairāwhiti operating as a PBI, as well as some of the challenges encountered.

Independent evaluations and reviews of Manaaki Tairāwhiti have been carried out – either formally, as in the 2019 evaluation of PBIs commissioned by the then-Social Investment Agency⁶⁰, or else showcased through other reviews such as the 2022 Productivity Commission review⁶¹ on the progress of joined-up social services.

These evaluations of Manaaki Tairāwhiti have been predominantly positive, with the formal evaluation in 2019 assessing Manaaki Tairāwhiti's maturity as a PBI "at the highly-developed stage" and concluding that:

"Manaaki Tairāwhiti has reached a level of maturity where some government agencies can see the opportunity to partner or leverage the commitment for collective action in the community. The challenge for government agencies in seeking to partner with Manaaki Tairāwhiti is the need to evolve their ways of commissioning, procurement and decision-making to facilitate collective action."

This recommendation, from the Social Investment Agency's review, for more evolved ways of commissioning and delivery of social services is the next step toward self determination for iwi and community-led organisations in Te Tairāwhiti.

Continual learnings and improvements based on evidence have been critical in the **collective's maturity**, as has the fact that the group is iwi-led and driven by local leadership who have expertise, connections to the region, and are committed to the long haul.

As such, there is a substantial **accumulation of knowledge, skills, and capability** within Te Tairāwhiti, alongside a **robust evidence base** of practices and approaches that work. We can therefore confidently claim that the region has a **demonstrable track record** in delivering on whānau-centred social services, aimed at social transformation.

3.3 | The strategic context

Where we are now

Returning to the principles in the cabinet paper, and based on both the assessment of our current state (section 3.2) and in our options analysis (section 3.1), and the insights presented in this section, we can conclude that:

- Where there is provision of strengths-based services, such as through current relational commissioning, there are still gaps in existing services and accountability metrics still remain output-focused around individual clients, rather than collective (whānau) wellbeing.
- There is also often an assumption that services already exist to meet people's needs, inherent in contract stipulations, but as we have shown this is not always the case. Instead, iwi providers and Navigators often adopt a "whatever it takes" approach to meet whānau needs, in ways that uphold their mana and self-determination; ways of working that are not currently captured by contract specifications and structures.
- Likewise, ways of tracking and measuring wellbeing in contracts are still focused on outputs (e.g., number of clients seen) rather than on outcomes that are valued by whānau themselves. Such metrics also ignore the fact that progress could look very different based on whānau circumstances and over time.
- We already know the status quo isn't working for whānau in Te Tairāwhiti. We therefore now need to select the intervention option that is best positioned to deliver on the outcomes we value and seek.
- The Tairāwhiti way of working, grounded in continuous evaluation, provides a way forward to improve service options and delivery at a regional level based on evidence of what is and isn't working for whānau.

This leaves us to conclude that social service devolution to iwi in Te Tairāwhiti is not just the best alternative forward, but also the option that most naturally aligns with what cabinet has set out previously⁶².

The challenge ahead

One of the main challenges is that by iwi, for iwi initiatives are happening largely in siloes and without proper resourcing, because under current models (PBIs and relational commissioning) devolution does not go far enough.

The review of joined-up social services similarly concludes "this lack of sufficient devolved funding and decision rights is a key failure in the current system architecture that needs to be addressed"⁶³.

We therefore need to be brave and take calculated risks in trialling new models of social assistance for whānau. Devolution offers a logical way forward in improving whānau wellbeing in Te Tairāwhiti whilst also honouring the crown's commitment to partnership with iwi under Te Tiriti.

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