

# NGĀ TINI WHETŪ: LESSONS LEARNT

Report Prepared for: Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, Te Puni Kōkiri,  
Oranga Tamariki and ACC

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Tēnā koutou katoa.

Kei te mihi noa atu au ki a koutou ngā kaimahi o Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, Te Puni Kōkiri, Oranga Tamariki, Te Kaporeihana Āwhina Hunga Whara, ā, ko ngā raukura o te kōmiti whakahaere hoki. Tēnā koutou katoa me ngā whakapapa ō tēnā o tēnā.

Nōku te honore nui, nā koutou i tuku whakaaro mai. Kia taea ai e au te tuitui tēnei kohinga kōrero.

nā Chelsea Grootveld

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of lessons learnt by two Ministries – Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) and Oranga Tamariki, a statutory Crown entity – Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA) involved in the design, planning and formative implementation stages of Ngā Tini Whetū from November 2019 to 31 December 2020.

The findings are based on interviews with key informants carried out during January and February 2021. The research does not include a desktop review of key project documentation.

### Key findings

Ngā Tini Whetū is a landmark two-year prototype for government agencies that has the potential to achieve positive outcomes for whānau and tamariki by changing the way that government agencies and Crown entities collaborate and partner with kaupapa Māori organisations and commissioning models.

It has created a space for Te Puni Kōkiri, Oranga Tamariki and ACC to collaborate and work in partnership with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency using a different policy, funding and commissioning model. The model is underpinned by kaupapa Māori principles including whānau centred co-design, policy, pooling of funding and resources, and devolution of Crown power and control.

Ngā Tini Whetū is currently being rolled out by Whānau Ora partners across Te Ika a Māui who are establishing a network of community based Kaiārahi to work directly with whānau. Over the next few months, whānau will have access to a new level of support and resourcing that was not previously available. This is a positive and significant shift towards providing more whānau with access to early services and support.

We learned from the interviews that agency and Crown entity relationships are still evolving, and more work is needed to build a cohesive and collaborative partnership whereby those involved have a shared understanding of the prototype purpose and what is expected of them during implementation. The collective work completed to date is unique, innovative and courageous. The research evidenced high levels of trust, collaboration, a permissive approach and goodwill among agency senior leaders to do whatever it takes to get this up and running. It also highlighted how those who were less directly involved in the early development of the prototype did not get the same degree of direction about the intention and importance of working in a different and collaborative way. More work is needed to embed collaborative ways of working.

This kaupapa was significantly impacted by COVID-19. Co-design workshops ceased and key staff were diverted to COVID related work from March 2020 which slowed momentum. Building shared outcomes and measures of success through open and transparent conversations will require the best of each organisation over the next 12 months.

The findings are presented to align with the three levels of systems change that the prototype seeks to positively shift. The three levels are:

1. System settings and levers

2. Funding mechanisms
3. Whānau Ora commissioning to support whānau ora outcomes.

### ***System settings and levers***

- Ministerial leadership critical to getting the prototype underway.
- Agencies share a common goal and collective aspirations for tamariki and whānau.
- WOCA leadership and political advocacy challenged Agencies to better understand how to partner with a Māori commissioning agency.
- Senior leaders on the Governance Group championed collaboration between Agencies but more work is needed to embed this approach.
- Short timeframes to establish a large-scale prototype led to rushed whakawhanaungatanga process and different agency expectations at Leadership Group.

### ***Funding mechanisms***

- Strong policy capability led by Oranga Tamariki and supported by DPMC, WOCA and TPK.
- Collective will drove funding solutions despite financial barriers.

### ***Whānau Ora commissioning to support whānau ora outcomes.***

- Public service maturing in terms of how it supports and embeds Whānau Ora across the public service.
- Slow shifting to/demonstration of outcomes-focused, strengths-based ways of working, understanding Whānau Ora in practice and what it means to commission.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the key findings the following recommendations are presented to be discussed and refined with the Agencies.

- a) Ministerial leadership is essential to galvanise cross agency resources and to help activate government funding mechanisms. Prioritise regular communications to Ministers, particularly in regard to the impending evaluation and development of shared outcomes and measures.
- b) While Agencies can often disagree on the how, their common goal and collective aspirations for tamariki and whānau is what anchors the prototype. When conversations at the leadership and governance group are tense and challenging it is important for officials to come back to the why – the purpose and intent underpinning Ngā Tini Whetū.
- c) The findings reinforce the importance of partnerships between the Crown and Māori where Māori (in this case WOCA) are able to articulate and achieve what it needs from the partnership. In order to continue to operate effectively in the partnership space, agencies need to share learnings from the prototype and build internal capability and understanding of what it means to partner and engage effectively with Māori.

- d) More work is needed to communicate the governance group approach and way of working for collaborative commissioning projects to the leadership group, and to define and agree on the optimal authorising environment and conditions that enable senior leaders to make tough decisions in order to support collaboration. A critical learning for public sector reforms is to better understand what capabilities and support public sector leaders need to make bold calls and how they will know they are the right things to do.
- e) Continuing to build collaborative ways of working through high trust, free and frank discussions at the leadership and governance group meetings will help to ensure agencies have clarity around respective roles, responsibilities and expectations. The governance group may need to reset and discuss what resource should be committed at both the leadership and governance group level. Future public service collaborative projects need to build in sufficient lead-in time to build whanaungatanga and establish relationships at the governance and leadership group levels.
- f) Agencies did not have a clear or straightforward path to achieve what they wanted to so policy staff had to be innovative within the available funding mechanisms and processes. This process needed to reset every time a new agency joined the prototype. It is important that agencies note the time and resource required to build a funding pathway when operating outside budget timeframes, but also that it is possible to do so.
- g) Share learnings into the Public Services Commission about how difficult it was for officials to utilise the changes to the Public Service Act (2020) and how these were overcome in order to develop targeted support for agencies to embed collaborative ways of working across the public service. Identify the tools, resources and practices being used to share with others. There is an opportunity for the Treasury and Public Service Commission to explore how innovative funding solutions can be applied to support future Māori-Crown and Iwi-Crown partnerships, as well as more easily facilitate cross agency resourcing.
- h) Identifying how to build experience, capability and evidence to support Whānau Ora as a model across government is important so that expertise isn't just resting in WOCA and TPK. However, agencies across the public service vary in terms of their respective risk appetite, willingness, capability and capacity to work in this space and it makes sense for agencies like TPK and Te Arawhiti to support agencies as capability develops .
- i) Acknowledge the positive shifts that have been made by agencies and determine what is needed to accelerate the shifts to support the prototype intent and focus on outcomes. Share what people involved have learned about systems change with other agencies, particularly the shifts in thinking that were made, what is possible, and how you can make those shifts in other collaborative work.
- j) Robust conversations between agencies at the leadership group level about what delivery will look like at the local level and the opportunities for collaboration will help to grow collective understanding of how to measure and present the outcomes and opportunities of this way of working. Reaching collective agreement at the Governance group on the shared outcomes and measures of success is critical and will enable agencies to continue to grow the prototype across the public service. The reset discussion is important to ensure agencies are on the same page in terms of agreeing on the shared measures of success and supporting each other to develop individual agency measures of success that align with the collective approach as well as individual agency priorities.

## INTRODUCTION

This section describes Ngā Tini Whetū, the prototype, what makes it innovative, the process for its development, how it will be delivered and next steps in the process. It also outlines the research objectives, approach, methods and key findings.

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### WHAT IS NGĀ TINI WHETŪ?

Ngā Tini Whetū is an innovative social service prototype being implemented by two government agencies (Te Puni Kōkiri and Oranga Tamariki) and a Crown entity (ACC), in partnership with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA) across Te Ika-a-Māui.

The objectives of the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype are to:

- Support whānau by navigating them towards a brighter future, preventing injuries and averting a care, protection or youth justice intervention from Oranga Tamariki.
- Reduce the number of incidents of family harm and improve access to services for whānau Māori using a Whānau Ora approach.

This will be achieved by working alongside whānau to achieve transformational change, as they move along the continuum from a state of languishing to flourishing. (WOCA, 2020a).

The prototype will gather evidence of how the Whānau Ora approach works as a decentralised early intervention model. Ngā Tini Whetū involves a \$42.4 million investment over two years.

### The context for Ngā Tini Whetū

Ngā Tini Whetū evolved as an alternative approach due largely to the over-representation of tamariki Māori in the care and protection custody of the Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki (State care), including youth justice (WOCA, 2020b:7). As at 30 June 2019, there were 6,450 children or young people in State care. Of these, 68% identified as being of either Māori or Māori and Pasifika ethnicity (Oranga Tamariki, 2020).

While the drivers for each agency becoming involved in Ngā Tini Whetū differed, there was a shared commitment to improving the wellbeing of children and their whānau.

During the formative stages of the prototype design and planning, the Public Service Act 2020 (the Act) came into force in August 2020. The Act provides a modern legislative framework that enables a more adaptive, agile and collaborative public service and includes stronger recognition of the role of the public service in supporting the partnership between Māori and the Crown (Public Service Commission, 2020).

The key enablers to this are: public service culture and behaviour; an updated framework for employment; effective leadership; and a greater range of options for configuring fit-for-purpose public service organisations.

The Act includes provisions across five key areas designed to help the public service join up services. The five areas are:

- A unified public service
- Strengthening the Crown's relationships with Māori
- Employment and workforce
- Leadership
- Organisational flexibility

In theory, the Act provided the requisite legislative framework to support the collaborative and partnership intent underpinning the prototype.

### **What is the approach?**

Ngā Tini Whetū is based on the Whānau Ora model (Oranga Tamariki, 2020). Whānau Ora is a culturally based and whānau-centred approach to wellbeing focused on whānau (family group) as a whole, as the decision-makers who determine their goals and aspirations (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2017).

Grounded in this model, Ngā Tini Whetū:

- builds on the strengths and capabilities of whānau, wrapping the necessary services and support around them to get better outcomes and create positive changes
- works holistically - addressing areas such as health, education, housing, employment, improved standards of living and cultural identity
- supports whānau to fully realise the confidence, mana and the belief in self, family and community.

#### *Whānau-centred*

Shifting the focus from 'services for individuals' to 'wrapping services around whānau' takes a more holistic view of whānau ora (family wellbeing).

Whānau often have complex needs and, under this prototype, specialist Navigators assist them in accessing integrated care and support. Placing whānau at the centre of the prototype allows those who are often overwhelmed or disempowered to determine what success is to them: encouraging them to develop their own solutions and build their capacity and resilience to become self-managing. When obstacles stand in their way, they are supported to move from crisis into planning for their future.

#### *Delivery by Whānau Ora partners*

Delivering Whānau Ora through Non-Government Organisations means day-to-day decision-making happens away from an overly risk-averse and micro-managed environment. The focus stays on whānau. (Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, 2020).

Community-based Whānau Ora partners sit in the communities they support. They can use local knowledge and adapt to issues happening in their community. This setting helps foster innovative thinking and solutions when it comes to providing local support. (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2018).

Whānau Ora have specialist staff who act as navigators and advocate for whānau. They work with whānau to find the services and support needed.



### **What makes it innovative?**

Ngā Tini Whetū is testing system change on three levels:

1. Whānau Ora commissioning to support the achievement of whānau ora outcomes
2. System settings and levers for support and change
3. Funding mechanisms (Oranga Tamariki, 2021).

This is the first time two government agencies and a Crown entity have collaborated and pooled funding to partner with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency. Ngā Tini Whetū privileges Whānau Ora and a commissioning for outcomes approach, with leadership shared by the central agencies and WOCA.

Ngā Tini Whetū used both the vote transfer funding mechanism and a funding agreement in order for TPK to commission on behalf of two government agencies and a Crown entity.

### **What initiated each agency's involvement?**

#### *Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency*

Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (formerly Te Pou Matakana) has served the North Island since 2014. WOCA supports the aspirations of whānau (families) by:

- commissioning community service providers that support whānau to achieve their goals.
- working alongside Whānau Ora partners to build on the strengths and assets of whānau and their communities.
- seeking co-investment, co-design and co-production opportunities that support whānau aspirations.

Commissioning activities aim to achieve whānau outcomes. Outcomes are identified by whānau themselves but at a macro level mean whānau will enjoy good health, experience economic wellbeing, be knowledgeable and well informed, be culturally secure, resilient, self-managing and able to participate fully in te ao Māori and in wider society.

In 2017, WOCA piloted the original Ngā Tini Whetū collective impact delivery model with a sample of Whānau Ora partners. Supported by a comprehensive evaluation model, the two-year pilot evidenced positive outcomes for whānau as a result of this way of working (Durie, 2017). The model remained dormant until it was reignited as a result of discussions held between the previous Minister for Children, Tracey Martin, and WOCA Chief Executive in late 2019.

WOCA Chief Executive provides leadership and political advocacy, and their Chief Operating Officer leads the operational delivery of the prototype.

#### *Oranga Tamariki*

Since 31 March 2017, Oranga Tamariki has been on a comprehensive transformation and change process, led by the former Chief Executive. By the end of 2019, Oranga Tamariki was an agency under significant public and political scrutiny fuelled by media coverage of the attempted Oranga Tamariki uplift at Hastings Hospital.

As a result, the Minister for Children was keen to look at how Oranga Tamariki could work differently with whānau by partnering with WOCA, and how Whānau Ora might support better outcomes for tamariki and whānau. Oranga Tamariki, the Child Wellbeing Unit and DPMC led the policy work underpinning Ngā Tini Whetū and worked closely alongside WOCA from the outset to shape what the prototype might look like. Deputy Chief Executive Voices of Children and Deputy Chief Executive Policy and Organisational Strategy led the work on behalf of Oranga Tamariki.

#### *Te Puni Kōkiri*

TPK was brought into the Ngā Tini Whetū fold in early 2020, when the Child and Wellbeing Lead shifted from DPMC to take up their Deputy Chief Executive Policy role. TPK entered the partnership with the benefit of an established working relationship with WOCA. In practice, this means TPK understood the Whānau Ora approach and what it means to commission for outcomes, and they had trust in WOCA and its Whānau Ora partners' ability to deliver and achieve positive outcomes for whānau.

In addition to the Deputy Chief Executive Policy's leadership, the relationship between TPK and WOCA was strengthened by a fellow Deputy Chief Executive who was deeply involved in the development of the commissioning approach and establishing both Whānau Ora agencies. Given this, TPK was well placed to execute its role as the lead agency facilitating the relationship between WOCA, Oranga Tamariki and ACC.

#### ACC

ACC is a Crown entity and also joined the cross-agency initiative of Ngā Tini Whetū in 2020. ACC had an existing relationship and memorandum of understanding with Te Whānau O Waipareira, and more recently a contract for services with WOCA to deliver ACC navigation service. This contract is no longer held by WOCA. The nature of the relationship was for the most part transactional.

In early 2020, a meeting between the WOCA and ACC Chief Executives helped 'reset the relationship'. As a result, Chief Customer Officer took responsibility on behalf of the ACC executive to drive the relationship forward and work with WOCA to look at how ACC could do things differently, particularly when it came to intervening in a more intensive way with whānau, with a focus towards reducing injury and harm.

#### **How Ngā Tini Whetū evolved**

In November 2019, the former Minister for Children instigated discussions with the former Associate Minister for Māori Development and ACC and Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust as a result of several contentious cases of how tamariki were being managed by Oranga Tamariki.

The Minister for Children engaged DPMC to help build the relationship between Oranga Tamariki and WOCA and explore how the two agencies might collaborate to support whānau in the early intervention and prevention space. Led by DPMC, both agencies engaged in a co-design process to shape up what the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype might look like and developed the business case to secure funding. The co-design process was impacted by COVID-19 and the national lockdown. As a result, the number of planned co-design hui were significantly reduced. The key difference between the 2017 pilot and this prototype was the partnership with Oranga Tamariki, and subsequently Te Puni Kōkiri and ACC.

In May/June 2020, the Ngā Tini Whetū governance and leadership groups were established. The governance group comprises the senior leaders responsible from TPK, Oranga Tamariki and ACC. In October 2020, the Chief Operating Officer from WOCA joined the group.

The leadership group comprises representatives from each of the three agencies and is responsible for managing the partnership between agencies and delivering the prototype. In December 2020, TPK commissioned WOCA to deliver Ngā Tini Whetū on behalf of the two government agencies and Crown entity.

### **What does it look like in practice?**

Ngā Tini Whetū will be delivered by 55 Whānau Ora service partners, across six regions, to approximately 800 whānau located across Te Ika a Maui. The first year of funding is allocated for establishment and training.

Kaiārahi and Programme Manager recruitment started in December 2020 through to February 2021. Workforce development is being delivered from March 2021. Whānau support will be delivered from June 2021 onwards.

The primary role of the Programme Managers is to strengthen the relationships with ACC and Oranga Tamariki at the local level and work through a local level co-design process to look at how to deliver Ngā Tini Whetū in a cohesive and effective way.

The Kaiārahi engage directly with whānau to provide wraparound support. As a result of Ngā Tini Whetū, Kaiārahi can access additional financial support that enables whānau to shift positively along the transformation of change spectrum from averting crisis and stabilisation into thriving and flourishing to become leaders in their whānau and community.

### **Next steps**

Ngā Tini Whetū delivery to whānau is expected to commence in June 2021. The governance group has commissioned a formative process evaluation to measure, and evidence implementation of the prototype and progress towards the Ngā Tini Whetū outcomes which will commence in May 2021.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The focus of this research is to capture the qualitative learnings from key stakeholders involved in the development of the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype from November 2019 to December 2020.

The key research question is:

- What are the lessons learnt by participating agencies during the development of the Ngā Tini Whetū Prototype in year one?

This research covered three focus areas:

1. The pathway to the partnership and where to from here
2. Individual agency and collective (subjective) experiences
3. Whānau Ora philosophy and how each agency have come to understand it.

Further detail on the research questions, research methodology and interview schedules, information sheets and informed consent forms are attached in the appendices.

## Research approach

The research used a kaupapa Māori research approach (Cram, Kennedy, Paipa, Pipi, Wehipeihana, 2015) and is qualitative based solely on semi-structured interviews with selected stakeholders from each agency.

Kaupapa Māori theory grounds the research in diverse whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori and marae realities. (Grootveld, 2013). Kaupapa Māori principles (Smith, 1999:120) guided our engagement throughout recruitment, interviews, and analysis and reporting:

- Aroha ki te tangata (respect for people)
- Kānohi kitea (the seen face; that is, present yourself to people face-to-face)
- Titiro, whakarongo. . . kōrero (look, listen. . . speak)
- Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)
- Kia tūpato (be cautious)
- Kāua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of the people)
- Kāua e māhaki (do not flaunt your knowledge).

Kaupapa Māori methodology required that we acknowledge the validity of Māori knowledge and incorporate this knowledge and a Māori worldview in the interpretation and analysis of the data (Pihama, Cram & Walker, 2002). It also demands that we view the wider cultural and societal context that is shaping the research material. (Smith, 1997).

This research is limited by its scope and timeframes, which did not allow time for a review of key documents (including policy papers, briefings and funding agreements) or quantitative data.

## Selection of interview cohort

The researcher interviewed a total of 22 participants. Table 1 outlines the interview participants' roles. Participants were selected by each agency. The intent was to provide a mix of senior leaders, policy, research and evaluation, and operational staff involved in the development of the prototype. The quotes selected for this report are attributed to the respective agency rather than to a particular role.

**Table 1: Interview participant roles**

Agency Organisation	Role
Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency	Chief Executive
	Chief Operating Officer
	Director Data, Systems, Analytics and Insights
	Director Wai Research
	Manager Analysis and Insights
	Project Manager
	Operations Lead
	Partnerships Manager
	Workforce Development Manager

Agency Organisation	Role
<b>Te Puni Kōkiri</b>	Deputy Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Whānau Ora Advisor Senior Project Manager
<b>Oranga Tamariki</b>	Deputy Chief Executive Voices of Children Deputy Chief Executive Policy & Organisational Strategy Director Partnerships Senior Project Manager Principal Policy Analyst Principal Advisor Research and Evaluation
<b>ACC</b>	Chief Customer Officer Manager Strategic Investment Partnered Delivery Manager Cultural Capability
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22 Participants</b>

## FINDINGS

The findings are presented to align with the three levels of systems change that the prototype seeks to positively shift. The three levels are:

1. System settings and levers
2. Funding mechanisms
3. Whānau Ora commissioning to support whānau ora outcomes.

The voices of the research participants are presented to strengthen the findings – including, where possible, a balance of perspectives, particularly on topics where there were divergent and/or opposing views. Linked to each key finding are recommendations. These can be used by the agencies to support changes to the prototype and to inform other collaborative models.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The key findings across the three levels are:

### System settings and levers

- Ministerial leadership critical to getting the prototype underway.
- Agencies share a common goal and collective aspirations for tamariki and whānau.
- WOCA leadership and political advocacy challenged Agencies to better understand how to partner with a Māori commissioning agency.
- Senior leaders on the Governance Group championed collaboration between Agencies but more work is needed to embed this approach.
- Short timeframes to establish a large-scale prototype led to rushed whakawhanaungatanga process and different agency expectations at Leadership Group.

### Funding mechanisms

- Strong policy capability led by Oranga Tamariki and supported by DPMC, WOCA and TPK.
- Collective will drove funding solutions despite financial barriers.

### Whānau Ora commissioning to support whānau ora outcomes

- Public service maturing in terms of how it supports and embeds Whānau Ora across the public service.
- Slow shifting to/demonstration of outcomes-focused, strengths-based ways of working, understanding Whānau Ora in practice and what it means to commission.
- Growing anxiety among agencies about how progress towards outcomes will be evidenced and measured in order to make decisions for future investment.

## SYSTEM SETTINGS AND LEVERS

### MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP CRITICAL TO GETTING THIS WORK UNDERWAY

In October 2019, the former Minister for Children instigated conversations with WOCA to explore how Oranga Tamariki could work differently in the early intervention space. The Minister exercised her

mandate as Minister for Children in order to bring on board the right senior personnel from DPMC and Oranga Tamariki. She also garnered support from her ministerial colleagues, including Minister for Whānau Ora, Associate Minister for Māori Development and ACC and the Minister of Finance.

Minister Martin had a vision for how we could be working differently in the early intervention space. She was keen for us to better enable the Whānau Ora approach and to be working in partnership with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency. Her commitment to us doing this was unwavering from the very beginning. And so that kind of means that your authorising environment is aligned really to where this is going, and I think we've got a lot to thank the Minister's office for in relation to their work within the beehive. (Oranga Tamariki)

The evidence showed how the Minister for Children's political leadership, influence and advocacy was critical in terms of enabling officials to secure joint ministerial approvals to approve funding reprioritisation and the vote transfer from Oranga Tamariki to Vote Māori Development and the Funding Agreement between ACC and Te Puni Kōkiri.

The Minister was very hands on, and she oversaw our first meeting between [the Child Wellbeing Lead – DPMC, Chief Executive Oranga Tamariki, Deputy Chief Executive Oranga Tamariki and Chief Operating Officer WOCA]. Full credit to her, she was very explicit about what she wanted from her officials. (WOCA)

### **Recommendation**

Ministerial leadership is essential to galvanise cross agency resources and to help activate government funding mechanisms. Providing regular communications to Ministers, particularly in regard to the impending evaluation and development of shared outcomes and measures should be a priority.

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## **AGENCIES SHARE A COMMON GOAL AND COLLECTIVE ASPIRATIONS FOR TAMARIKI AND WHĀNAU**

Early discussions between WOCA and Oranga Tamariki were facilitated by the Child Wellbeing Lead at DPMC. Positioned within a central agency, the Lead brokered and facilitated the relationship between WOCA and Oranga Tamariki in order to find a common goal and develop a shared kaupapa. This leadership from within a central agency was instrumental in bringing the two agencies together.

We eventually got quite a lot of synergy with the Oranga Tamariki team and DPMC. But there was a massive amount of work to do by central agencies behind the scenes, like breaking down barriers, bringing them to the table constantly with the right mindset. (WOCA)

The two agencies, Crown entity and commissioning agency shared a common goal - all wanted to support and enable better outcomes for tamariki and whānau. This collective aspiration has helped Agencies to stay the course through the ups and downs of the first twelve months.

### **Recommendation**

While Agencies can often disagree on the how, their common goal and collective aspirations for tamariki and whānau is what anchors the prototype. When conversations at the leadership and governance group are tense and challenging it is important for officials to come back to the why – the purpose and intent underpinning Ngā Tini Whetū.

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## WOCA LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL ADVOCACY CHALLENGED AGENCIES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW TO PARTNER WITH A MĀORI COMMISSIONING AGENCY.

The Agencies identified how a key turning point in their thinking was sparked by conversations with WOCA leadership who clearly articulated the prototype vision and purpose and inspired agency leaders.

I think the massive turning point was when WOCA spoke to the group and said 'I see this as the three levels of how do we invest differently? How do we change the way we commission for better outcomes for whānau across different agencies? How do we all give up a bit of power by giving the money to TPK to administer. Then, importantly it's about whānau'. With the changes to the Public Sector Act in how we're supposed to do better, I was like this is the lever for us to actually potentially be able to prototype how government agencies can give up a bit of power and stop freaking out about how we control 800 whānau and drive perverse incentive. It was a huge relief. (ACC)

From a WOCA perspective the pathway to the partnership was a journey of contestation borne off the back of political advocacy and proactive Māori leadership. The co-design and early negotiation process was described as complex and difficult.

Nothing occurs by consensus, change only comes through contest. I think Oranga Tamariki were brought to the table yelling and screaming because their Minister forced them to. So, as a result of my discussions with the CEO, ACC came to the party. TPK was always going to come to the party. The net result is that we have a nutcracker here, a wedge. So, we now have got a precedent for a multi-enveloped investment in Māori, but it wasn't easy. (WOCA)

When Minister Martin approached WOCA in 2019, work had already commenced on a whānau centred research programme designed to inform the Māori-led review of Oranga Tamariki. The review emerged as a result of persistent feedback from Whānau Ora partners about the negative impacts of Oranga Tamariki practice on tamariki, mokopuna and whānau.

The review happened partly in response to so many partners asking for support about uplifts, that has been going on for at least three to four years and was building a lot of momentum. It precipitated a whole lot of work in the Oranga Tamariki space even though that wasn't part of our contract, but it was a massive trend happening across our Whānau Ora partners, just terrible stuff. That all got highlighted in Hawkes Bay, and it all came to a head as a result. WOCA decided it's not a public sector agency and you cannot just sit here and not advocate for our people. So, the Board decided that's just something we must do. (WOCA)

This Ngā Tini Whetū mahi started on the back of the Māori-led review, so you know, our whole thinking towards Oranga Tamariki was not healthy at that point. We had no relationship as a result of the review and our relationship was not in a good starting position. So, our first hui was about okay understanding are you really committed, and honestly truly committed to turnaround your behaviour and the way that you work with Māori. (WOCA)

WOCA's leadership was instrumental in terms of helping to build agencies' understanding of Whānau Ora. In particular, the ability of WOCA to clearly articulate the purpose and intent, push back, shift



hearts and minds and inspire by speaking to the potential that Ngā Tini Whetū provides for whānau, tamariki and the public service.

It all came together pretty messily, it wasn't codesigned lovely and neat. It's taken a whole year from the agreement and we were able to get the contract in December, but it was us constantly having to push back on the traditional model of a contract for service. I said no, we've got to push back. You guys have to look at a more systems view of the public sector. Oranga Tamariki, ACC what you're now doing is setting and defining a brand new model for how government agencies can achieve outcomes for Māori using a very different business model to your current BAU. (WOCA)

WOCA described the first 12 months as 'waiting for agencies to catch-up' to their business as usual way of working, and to see the potential, to trust and have confidence in WOCA and the partners.

This is nothing new for us, this way of working. What the process over the last 12 months has shown us is, well, it has reaffirmed our approach and ways of working. (WOCA)

The past twelve months has been about us building the cultural literacy and whānau literacy of agencies. I've seen the discomfort as they've struggled to let go of their deficit-based approaches, which is all reflected in their languaging. To be fair I've seen this slowly change over time. I do see self-reflection, stepping back and agencies trying not to control the conversation but it's a constant tussle. We operate from a whānau-centred paradigm, which permeates the way we think, work, practice, performance manage, collect data, everything we do. (WOCA)

Similarly, TPK leadership commented on how building trust has required robust and ongoing conversations between senior leaders.

I've had to say to my colleagues to stop trying to specify details up front, things like the whānau cohorts, the numbers, the reporting and evaluation etc. I said you're trying to understand something for which there's a great deal of uncertainty. What you need to do is trust them. They've got as much skin in the game now as we've got. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

Oranga Tamariki leadership also spoke positively about their experience and the privilege of being involved in a prototype of this nature and their desire to capture the lessons learnt to grow this way of working across the public service.

### ***Recommendation***

The findings reinforce the importance of partnerships between the Crown and Māori where Māori (in this case WOCA) are able to articulate and achieve what it needs from the partnership. In order to continue to operate effectively in the partnership space, agencies need to share learnings from the prototype and build internal capability and understanding of what it means to partner and engage with Māori.

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SENIOR LEADERS ON THE GOVERNANCE GROUP CHAMPIONED COLLABORATION BUT MORE WORK IS NEEDED TO EMBED THIS APPROACH

The Ngā Tini Whetū governance group comprises senior leaders from the collaborating agencies and they provide governance oversight and lead the strategic direction of Ngā Tini Whetū. Senior leaders across each agency helped source funding, secure internal approvals, and bring in the right people at the right time to support the process. The interviews showed how these senior leaders were driven by a range of motivations including a commitment to work collaboratively, a desire to test a new way of working, a willingness to trust in the Whānau Ora approach and model, and shared ambitions for children and whānau.

For example, ACC leadership drove the ACC process and was able to source and confirm funding within a relatively short period of time (two weeks). This was significant given the context of the ACC operating environment and its strong focus on evidencing return on investment.

We were in a uniquely good position to be able to commit funding because of the injury prevention fund, which is a significant budget and within that the flexibility to invest in the prototype. So, this is very innovative for ACC. Not a clear line of sight in terms of having a return on investment model. I know Whānau Ora have their investment model, and I have no doubt we will get there. (ACC)

Leaders stood up to lead this kaupapa in a way that deviates from the modus operandi of most public service senior leaders, and in doing so accepted the potential reputational risks and opportunities. This risk orientation was critical because the prototype is premised on a collaborative way of working – pooling funding and commissioning for outcomes – that had never been done before.

We got to the point where agencies understood if you don't get it going and set some broader operating parameters, we'd never get it off the ground and we certainly wouldn't have got it off the ground in a way that Ministers could announce before the election. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

Senior leaders described how they were able to buy into the prototype because of the existing relationships they had with each-other, particularly the trust and confidence they had in TPK leadership.

I trust the TPK leadership, and he trusts me; it may seem like a funny thing to say but you can't underplay the importance of these things that make it possible to you know go out on a limb. It enabled the conversation, it's not really just about knowing each other, but it has enabled us to have the free and frank conversations that we needed to have in a safe space knowing that it wasn't going to be misinterpreted. (Oranga Tamariki)

Participants from Agencies across all levels commented on the strong leadership skills and capabilities demonstrated by each of the senior leaders.

I think one of the critical success factors as well as the relationship between the DCEs was also the skills and capability. I think a lot of the work they've done is not the usual, but exemplary. And I guess also the openness that they've had in including some others in more strategic discussions and being open to talking about risks and how we work through these is really helpful, but not how we would normally operate. (Oranga Tamariki)

Moreover, while the research evidenced high levels of trust, collaboration, a permissive approach and goodwill among agency senior leaders to do whatever it takes to get this up and running, it also

highlighted the need to engage and communicate this way of working to the leadership group and the rest of their organisations, so others understand and know what they need to do.

This is forcing government agencies and Crown entities to think differently about how we commission, there is a whole bunch of learning for each of us about how hard it is to do this kind of work when we aren't the sole controller. That's what the point of the Public Sector reform is about. So, we need to measure and evaluate and put back the learnings into the Public Services Commission, here's advice, here's tools. (ACC)

### **Recommendation**

More work is needed to communicate the governance group approach and way of working for collaborative commissioning projects to the leadership group, and to define and agree on the optimal authorising environment and conditions that enable senior leaders to make tough decisions in order to support collaboration. A critical learning for public sector reforms is to better understand what capabilities and support public sector leaders need to make bold calls and how they will know they are the right things to do.

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### **SHORT TIMEFRAMES LED TO RUSHED WHAKAWHANAUNGATANGA PROCESS AND DIFFERENT AGENCY EXPECTATIONS AT LEADERSHIP GROUP LEVEL.**

Relationships sit at the heart of the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype. The process of building relationships between the two Ministries and the Crown entity, in particular, required intentional leadership and significant resource. This was challenging given the short timeframes to establish a large-scale project with expectations to immediately deliver outcomes.

The initial meeting [WOCA, Oranga Tamariki and DPMC] was stilted to start with, and that's because it was like a negotiation. And I knew that's how it would look and that's usually what happens in the formative stages of things, too much Māori-Crown engagement, the practice is built around negotiations. It's not codesign. More time needs to be spent on whakawhanaungatanga and it's not just who am I and where I am from, but what do I think and where are my ideas from. (Te Puni Kōkiri).

The amount of time required to build relationships was more than participants had expected: first, the time needed to reset the relationship between Oranga Tamariki and WOCA; second, between Oranga Tamariki, Te Puni Kōkiri and ACC; and finally, between all of the partners. This process was led primarily by Te Puni Kōkiri and supported by senior leaders at the governance group level.

A good collaborative approach I think remains possible but we're not there yet. And what we need to do is avoid putting things into concrete when we're still working on the soft wire. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

The prototype launched too quickly into operationalising something that was by its nature quite ambiguous. (Oranga Tamariki)

Things were evolving but it didn't feel like we were all in the driving seat together. It was a real push and pull, and I imagine that's probably still present at the leadership group level. We haven't really got this real sense of collective partnership and togetherness to drive this. (ACC)

I don't think all agencies have reached a level of comfort where they are totally happy to hand over to us to manage the Whānau Ora partners. So, I need to acknowledge TPK leadership for their part in this kaupapa because if it wasn't for them driving this, I don't think we would be where we are today. (WOCA)

At the leadership group level, participants were frustrated by the slow pace at which the prototype developed as agencies struggled to work collaboratively. Relationship tensions were exacerbated by new staff coming into the project with no shared induction process to help build their understanding about the purpose, intent, desired outcomes and ways of working.

I feel like Ngā Tini Whetū, it changed directions so many times. You know initially the discussions were only held with Oranga Tamariki and DPMC leading, and then we went through a co-design and that ended, and Oranga Tamariki really came into the picture. DPMC exited and TPK and ACC came in. So, it felt for me like it's evolved. (WOCA)

While participants acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impending general election (held in October 2020) there was a shared view that the process of coming together at the leadership group level was "painful". The interviews showed that more work is needed to build the collective partnership and ensure the intent and priorities of the governance group are clearly passed on to the leadership group.

I remember at our first meeting thinking, 'why are we meeting without the commissioning agency?'. Well, we needed to work out as government agencies how to understand each other and work together firstly, so that was different. I hadn't realised that we would have so much work to do. (Oranga Tamariki)

In November 2020, TPK appointed a new project manager with strong relationships and experience working in WOCA and TPK. The interviews showed how this appointment was a significant turning point in the prototype and helped expedite decision making and project deliverables. In a more practical sense, the evidence showed how decision-making takes longer and paperwork is a challenge because there are four agencies involved and at times, no clear ownership of specific deliverables. Moreover, ACC and Oranga Tamariki acknowledged that they had not committed sufficient resource to do the work required on top of business as usual, so it was a constant juggle.

There are four of us in this family and we all have slightly different views, and we have to produce documents for us all to agree on. So, it's quite complicated because this is all so new. Some tasks have taken significantly longer – like the evaluation. (Oranga Tamariki)

The interviews highlighted a misalignment of expectations in terms of the extent to which agencies expected to be involved in decision-making and how the prototype would be operationalised, monitored and evaluated. For example, Oranga Tamariki officials expected to partner with WOCA based on their understanding of the original policy and funding documents which outlined the potential for a fulsome operational role. However, during the interagency discussions it became clear that the original implementation approach shifted, and Oranga Tamariki would not be involved in operational decision making.

As I got more involved in our cross-government meetings and working through all of the processes, it became more and more clear that our actual role was about investing in the

kaupapa and there really was no expectations from the commissioning agency that we would be partnering at an operational level. (Oranga Tamariki)

I think the openness of spirit is huge, but I've watched our organisation struggle. I guess in understanding how much they can control and what they have to give up. There were quite a few discussions where people talked past each other, and it wasn't that they were trying to be controlling or directive, I think it was more that they genuinely hadn't fully understood the approach. (Oranga Tamariki).

When we understood the implications for us once we released our vote dollar, that we actually lost our ability to ask for return. I'm not sure that we understood that. We still thought even though that had happened that we could still work with the Whānau Ora partners around what cohorts we'd like to be working with and how. We lost all ability to do that unless they wanted us to have that relationship with them. (Oranga Tamariki)

Although TPK tried to lead discussions and align agency expectations, this process has been ongoing and links directly to each agency's understanding of how the Whānau Ora commissioning approach works in practice.

There was a lot of aligning of expectations, constantly. I think certain officials definitely knew quite a lot about Whānau Ora, and they were very willing to learn more – how it would work in practice, what a devolved model could look like. And I think the other agencies found that quite hard to adjust to. In the sense that they thought we could fully navigate how WOCA would go about finding whānau, and how much involvement ACC and Oranga Tamariki would have on the ground. But that's just not the way it works. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

### **Recommendation**

Continuing to build collaborative ways of working through high trust, free and frank discussions at the leadership and governance group meetings will help to ensure agencies have clarity around respective roles, responsibilities and expectations. The governance group may need to reset and discuss what resource should be committed at both the leadership and governance group level. Future public service collaborative projects need to build in sufficient lead-in time to build and establish relationships at the governance and leadership group levels.

## **FUNDING MECHANISMS**

### **STRONG POLICY CAPABILITY LED BY ORANGA TAMARIKI AND SUPPORTED BY DPMC, TPK AND WOCA**

The policy work required to develop the Ngā Tini Whetū business case to seek funding approval was led by Oranga Tamariki and supported by DPMC, TPK and WOCA. This collaborative process was driven by a strong impetus to secure funding and confirm contractual arrangements in order for support to be made available for whānau.

I knew Oranga Tamariki had a willing Minister and that, what we needed to do from my perspective, was as quickly as possible get the whole concept of money and contracting out

of the road because people get obsessed by it and forget about the relationships we're trying to build. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

While the policy process was described as “lengthy” in reality it was much quicker than the usual policy process. First, the Ngā Tini Whetū proposal didn't align with public service budget timeframes and processes, which meant the policy team could not go through the usual process of bidding for new investment. As a result, numerous discussions and meetings between the agencies were held in order to develop options and indicative costings for the model. This process took time.

Second, the process also required Oranga Tamariki to seek approval to reprioritise a funding underspend for the 2019/20 financial year, which added another layer of complexity.

There was quite a bit of discussion that led to what seemed like quite a simple funding proposal, but it was actually quite a torturous process to get there. (Oranga Tamariki)

Another challenge was that all agencies had slightly different drivers which the policy team tried to reconcile. This was complicated by the fact that different agencies joined the prototype at different points in time.

### **Recommendation**

Agencies did not have a clear or straightforward path to achieve what they wanted to so policy staff had to be innovative within the available funding mechanisms and processes. This process needed to reset every time a new agency joined the prototype. It is important that agencies note the time and resource required to build a funding pathway when operating outside budget timeframes, but also that it is possible to do so.

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### **COLLECTIVE WILL DROVE FUNDING SOLUTIONS DESPITE FINANCIAL BARRIERS**

Public sector reforms introduced in 2020 intend to support cross agency work but the practice of collaborating, shifting and pooling resources between agencies for this work has not been straightforward.

There was a collective desire to pool resources so that this prototype could be managed quickly and efficiently to get funds out to whānau. In order to pool agency funding, the collective worked through three options. The first was to set up a contractual relationship between each agency and WOCA but this was considered complicated and burdensome on a number of levels. The second option required TPK to invoice the different agencies to pay for Ngā Tini Whetū to WOCA in instalments, in line with the Whānau Ora payment model. However, this was found to be inconsistent with the Public Finance Act in terms of the various Agencies transferring funds to TPK. A third option offered by Treasury was to pool funding using the Vote transfer mechanism and a Funding Agreement.

The Vote transfer required joint Ministerial approval from Minister for Children, Minister for Whānau Ora and the Minister of Finance. This process was led by the Minister for Children who was able to secure funding using this mechanism. A Funding Agreement between ACC and TPK then enabled the funding recovery from ACC to occur. While not unusual in the public service, what was different was the desire to pool resources and for TPK to commission on behalf of multiple agencies.

The key takeaway is collaborating and pooling of funding and moving resources around is still not as easy as we might have been led to believe that some of the reforms would allow. CEs and DCEs might agree but it gets down to a finance shop and they go no, you can't do that, no, it doesn't work like that. And quite obviously you can do it because we did it, but it just seems a very difficult process to make happen. In the end we had to get joint Ministers involved to seek approval from the Minister of Finance. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

The Public Service Act puts forward new ways that you can collaborate but actually they're not ready and we couldn't use them. (Oranga Tamariki)

### **Recommendation**

Share learnings into the Public Services Commission about how difficult it was for officials to utilise the changes to the Public Service Act (2020) and how these were overcome in order to develop targeted support for agencies to embed collaborative ways of working across the public service. Identify the tools, resources and practices being used to share with others. There is an opportunity for the Treasury and Public Service Commission to explore how innovative funding solutions can be applied to support future Māori-Crown and Iwi-Crown partnerships, as well as more easily facilitate cross agency resourcing.

## WHĀNAU ORA COMMISSIONING TO SUPPORT WHĀNAU ORA OUTCOMES

### PUBLIC SERVICE MATURING IN TERMS OF HOW IT SUPPORTS AND EMBEDS WHĀNAU ORA ACROSS THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

Whānau Ora is a proven, sophisticated and evidence-based approach that supports and enables whānau to achieve positive outcomes. Given this, prototyping a new way of working for government using the Whānau Ora approach demonstrated how the public sector is maturing and showed courage to pool resources towards it in order to support tamariki and their whānau.

From a WOCA perspective, Ngā Tini Whetū reaffirms and reinforces the Whānau Ora approach and way of working. It also provides Whānau Ora partners with the opportunity to expand on their business as usual work and directing a new pool of resources towards supporting whānau to flourish.

Our role as the commissioning agency is to ensure that we're advocating on behalf of our whānau. ... it's ground up solutions, it's about whānau success and ensuring that we advocate in that way and push back. And that we hold the mana on behalf of whānau when we speak to government agencies. It's also about an education and learning journey for our agencies as well because they're not used to this approach and way of working. (WOCA)

Ngā Tini Whetū is aspirational because part of our role is to help support and build self-determining whānau, to build resilience but to be able to dream and actually build the sustainability to be champions for their own whānau and communities. So, we work alongside our partners to allow the way that they work with their communities to enable them to flourish for it to be their own model. This is their chance to help the whānau they have stabilised to look at the next steps of flourishing. (WOCA Workforce Development Manager)

In addition, TPK became a broker and advocate for Whānau Ora and worked closely with agencies to build their understanding of how the commissioning relationship works with WOCA. The evidence showed this work was ongoing and many robust conversations were had between agencies.

Because TPK has commissioning agencies outcome agreements and investment plans, we're much more comfortable with wider specs whereas I think other agencies wanted a whole lot of upfront assurances. It does seem agencies are still very cautious about their upfront service performance, contractual requirements whereas we've been running the commissioning approach since it began in 2013/14. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

It appears the role of TPK is critical in terms of providing an appropriate funding vehicle, support and advocacy. TPK is adapting to fulfil its new role as the bridge and facilitator between agencies and WOCA.

The role of Te Puni Kōkiri is to protect the commissioning agency in regard to our Whānau Ora kaupapa. (WOCA)

For TPK, it requires of them a whole lot of new processes for managing the relationships between agencies. They take on a different role in this prototype. They need to push back on other agencies. (WOCA)

ACC entered the partnership with their leadership having a strong understanding of the Whānau Ora model and approach and over-time became a strong advocate for Whānau Ora.

ACC came in late in the piece and they actually got it straight away so another person who helped drive this was their leadership. We had a positive hui, and she was able to reiterate our policy, our approach, our model and understood it. She's been a good advocate for us at that leadership level. (WOCA)

Furthermore, ACC would have liked the opportunity to engage in the co-design of the prototype at the front-end. The concerns were primarily about being interested in the potential to enable a strengths-based approach to enable whānau outcomes, and less concerned with the need to prevent intervention by any agency including themselves. ACC acknowledged how joining the partnership during the later stages of the partnership formation inhibited their ability to innovate at the whānau level and explore this potential directly with WOCA because decisions had already been made.

Early on I was really trying to understand, 'okay what is this and how does it fit with our mahi? What is the opportunity here?', I said to my manager that this actually feels like a big bus that's already going and I'm trying to catch up to it. A lot of the thinking and decisions had already been formulated, and I was trying to catch up on the devices and levers that enable us to participate. Our ability to influence and front foot discussions was limited because we were late to the discussions. (ACC).

### **Recommendation**

Identifying how to build experience, capability and evidence to support Whānau Ora as a model across government is important so that expertise isn't just resting in WOCA and TPK. However, agencies across the public service vary in terms of their respective risk appetite, willingness, capability and



capacity to work in this space and it makes sense for agencies like TPK and Te Arawhiti to support agencies as capability develops .

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### SLOW SHIFTING TO OUTOMES FOCUSED AND STRENGTHS-BASED WAYS OF WORKING

The prototype has forced Agencies to think and operate differently which unsurprisingly has created tensions. The reported evolution and shifts in agency thinking from western policy, deficit-based thinking towards a kaupapa Māori strengths-based worldview were significant but required a process of constant push back, negotiation, reflection, anxiety, tensions, frustration, compromise and acceptance at both governance and leadership levels.

The common shifts reported by agencies are highlighted in Table 2. The shift in thinking from an output-based contract to an outcome-based contract is still occurring, and as the evidence showed is not a linear shift. The ongoing push-pull evidenced in the relationship also applies to the mindset and behaviour shift required to support outcome-based commissioning. The push pull is a constant force at play as agencies are forced to step outside of their respective agency models to engage and partner as a collective.

**Table 2: Ngā Tini Whetū Reported Positive Shifts in Agency Thinking**

Shift From	Towards
Privileging Western public policy and business administration models	Deprogramming and reorienting towards a kaupapa Māori model
Using deficit models	Understanding strengths-based aspirational models
Supporting whānau in crisis mode	Enabling whānau to flourish and become leaders in their whānau and community
Caution and uncertainty	Trusting
Focus on service specifications	Letting go of power and control, questioning own assumptions
Directing, dictating, leading and prescribing	Listening, learning, co-designing, enabling
Contracting for services	Commissioning for outcomes
Business as usual	Being open to uncertainty.
High risk	Seeing the opportunity
Asserting control over implementation, monitoring and evaluation	Trusting in the commissioning agency approach and track record for delivering outcomes

WOCA acknowledges the positive shifts that have occurred in regard to the shifts in agency language, sharing of power and control and the ability to be self-reflective.

I said to agencies your language is deficit based and pathologizing, blaming things on whānau that are symptoms rather than causes. So, I think there's been a lot more self-reflection from agencies. I've observed the language change, just them stepping back, them being more self-reflective, them actually not dominating the conversations. They've stepped back and want to listen and hear. So, I think those are all really great things. Part of it was unbundling their

business as usual approach because you're working with Māori now, so this is how we do it and that way is not going to work for us. (WOCA).

Examples of positive shifts in agency thinking are demonstrated in the following quotes from each of the three government agencies.

What I've found through the evaluation planning process is I've heard and seen others transition to a different way of thinking. Because in early conversations where we spoke about needing and wanting to know all of this stuff – through the fullness of what we thought our role would be. However, if we get that information that would be a bonus. (Oranga Tamariki)

The biggest and common thread I think in how agencies respond is really trying to shift from the deficit, risk-based stuff into a strengths-based, protective factors mindset. So, you know there is a lot of back and forwards between what Oranga Tamariki were expecting and wanting and what we were wanting to see. (ACC)

There's been lots of listening and learning for us as senior leaders and an agency as a whole really. (Oranga Tamariki)

For one Oranga Tamariki senior leader, the process of change was marked and required significant deprogramming in order to fully realise and engage in the Ngā Tini Whetū opportunity.

I've had to undergo a bit of deprogramming. I'm trained in the environmental scan, problem definition, cohort analysis, options development, criteria assessment, it's very western. It's comfortable, but when you're doing co-design with a partner, particularly a partner who in all fairness probably has far more sophisticated evidence sitting around their programme, they approach through the lens of strength rather than deficit. That process of deprogramming and trying to come to an opportunity from a strengths-based perspective it was quite challenging. Because you're forever thinking about how am I going to explain myself to others? How do I relay this back into the Crown machinery? (Oranga Tamariki)

As a collective, there is a general consensus that this prototype provides a unique opportunity for agencies to collaborate and build new ways of working across the public service. The process of agreeing on shared measures of success, however, is ongoing and each agency expressed the desire to achieve outcomes which reflect their different reporting and accountability requirements.

I'm really keen as a collective to learn about how we do this better as public service agencies so that we could repeat this with other projects. Because it makes sense to collaborate right. What we're prototyping is this way of working together. (ACC)

### **Recommendation**

It is important to acknowledge the positive shifts that have been made by agencies and equally to determine what is needed to accelerate the shifts to support the prototype intent and focus on outcomes. For those agencies involved in the prototype, sharing what people have learned about systems change with other people in the public service helps build the knowledge base about the shifts in thinking that were made within respective organisations and agencies, what is possible, and how you can make those shifts in other collaborative work.

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## ANXIETY AMONG AGENCIES ABOUT HOW PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES WILL BE MEASURED AND EVIDENCED

The findings showed varying levels of anxiety among agencies about how progress towards outcomes and impact will be measured and evidenced. The data showed a slow but positive shift in agencies' understanding of Whānau Ora and an openness to trust that what it looks like in practice will be evidenced in time. Being two steps removed from implementation is a significant challenge for agencies and deviates from traditional public service operating models. Each agency has its own reporting accountabilities, metrics of success and frameworks for understanding what good looks like.

As a Crown entity, ACC reports to its Board and must demonstrate a return on investment as a result of the prototype. Conversations about data sharing and using the IDI to demonstrate progress towards achieving outcomes are ongoing.

We all need to be in a room together to have validated the design and what's happening in terms of the model. We need to get very clear on what the measures of success are. And I think we need almost re-establish the cadence of not just the meetings, but the actual flow of information and what's required as we go through. I just want to find out what the right tension is between letting the right things happen versus putting the screws on to make sure that we get to a place where we're starting to deliver. (ACC)

The Agencies are somewhat stuck between the traditional expectations on them to deliver and report on 'widgets', to account for their use of public money, and the realisation that their ways of working have not been resulting in positive community impact. They need more help to allow them to innovate and work differently. ACC noted this and the role that the Public Service Commission could have in supporting agencies to collaborate better and work across the system to create better outcomes for Māori.

I think we should be looking to the public sector reforms and do some of the evaluation with the purpose of feeding back into the Public Services Commission and say, 'this is how you do these things. But don't leave to just this project and it be one off because increasingly we will have to work across agencies and increasingly, we need to be better for Māori. So, learning from this project will help commission new work in this space. (ACC)

How we measure the change in terms of how we measure success internally, that's the tension that I think we're still discovering (ACC)

Similarly, TPK supports a monitoring and evaluation approach that validates the prototype, solidifies the Whānau Ora approach, and provides insights to support other agencies to work in this way.

WOCA has to demonstrate in ways that officials can validate that this is a good thing to do and worth expanding. We do this, it puts it well beyond a shadow of a doubt. And it's not anything that needs to be doubted, it's just we are giving WOCA a frame and an opportunity to bring on board the wider public service. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

Ngā Tini Whetū points to a different way of operating and different value of monitoring and I suppose I am interested in if you can use something like this open up channels for other agencies to share their resources down the commissioning pipeline. In that regard, if you could

do that, you might keep the commissioning model, but you need a way to encourage other agencies to want to use that apparatus. (Te Puni Kōkiri)

Oranga Tamariki leadership spoke about the system shifts they would like to see as a result of Ngā Tini Whetū and how this might be reflected in future work.

My biggest fear would be if I was to come back in ten years' time and I wouldn't be able to see this work somewhere in the whakapapa of the agency. What you're hearing is a great sense of potential. When you've been in government for as long as we have, you know how unique this experience has been. We want to see the impact of Ngā Tini Whetū in a positive way in that it has transformed how we partner with not just the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency but iwi and Māori throughout the country. (Oranga Tamariki)

From the WOCA perspective, the prototype provides agencies with an opportunity to align with the Whānau Ora outcomes framework and embed a whānau centred measurement approach so that what agencies do serves Māori better.

They came and said well these are the agency outcomes that we're interested in which is great. But I said we already have our own outcomes. So, it doesn't make sense for us to answer your outcomes because we already had our outcomes set. You're on our waka literally you know. So, you need to understand how we do it rather than us trying to fit in with you. This time you need to fit in with us, you need to understand what we do, you need to understand the outcomes that are important to us. (WOCA)

Oranga Tamariki staff talked about the journey they are in in terms of learning how to present the outcomes and opportunities of this way of working so that they can continue to grow it. They remain confident in the Whānau Ora approach and optimistic about the Whānau Ora partners' ability to achieve positive outcomes for whānau and tamariki.

It's not the Crown's job to dictate and recognising that we are working with an organisation who are already doing this work and know who these whānau are and what the needs are in an area or region and how to find whānau. (Oranga Tamariki)

We're just not an active partner in the operationalisation of it, which further impacts on our ability to influence change. And because I have faith in the Whānau Ora approach, it's not a biggie for me personally, but I think in terms of systems change it's, you know, we're losing an opportunity, but then maybe change is going to happen in the system in a way that it never has before you know because of where we are at as a country. (Oranga Tamariki)

Similarly, ACC leadership expressed confidence in the Whānau Ora approach and its alignment with the agency's Whāia Te Tika strategy.

It's [Ngā Tini Whetū] formative in terms of this arrangement. Whānau Ora is not formative, it's well embedded and so much of this is new to us at ACC. And so, for ACC, it was a case of trying to position this within our strategic objectives particularly around injury prevention. But, also the need to do things differently particularly in terms of bridging between Whāia Te Tika, our strategy which is very much around improving access and experience outcomes for Māori whānau and upholding us as a good Treaty partner. (ACC)

## **Recommendation**

Robust conversations between agencies at the leadership group level about what delivery will look like at the local level and the opportunities for collaboration will help to grow collective understanding of how to measure and present the outcomes and opportunities of this way of working. Reaching collective agreement at the Governance group on the shared outcomes and measures of success is critical and will enable agencies to continue to grow the prototype across the public service. The reset discussion is important to ensure agencies are on the same page in terms of agreeing on the shared measures of success and supporting each other to develop individual agency measures of success that align with the collective approach as well as individual agency priorities.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The evidence showed that the senior leaders involved in Ngā Tini Whetū from the early stages of the prototype development share a common understanding of the purpose and intent and by and large, a commitment to do whatever it takes to make this happen. Conversely, agencies that have joined Ngā Tini Whetū more recently (e.g., within the last six months) lacked clarity about the purpose, expectations and ways of working.

The pace at which agencies transitioned from a traditional siloed way of working to a more collaborative modus operandi has varied and is an ongoing journey. Notwithstanding the positive intent to collaborate and deliver better outcomes for whānau and tamariki, more work is needed to manage the challenges.

There is a balancing act that agency leaders are acutely aware of and actively trying to manage through ongoing discussions – namely, managing the demand for Ngā Tini Whetū to ‘evidence’ and show a return on investment while allowing the model the space to take shape and form and enabling Whānau Ora partners to do what they do best. Equally important is that each agency’s performance is measured and that accountabilities are established to those measures.

Building agencies’ shared understanding of Whānau Ora outcomes and metrics is critical over the next 12 months. As a point of tension and anxiety, this could form a part of the regular Governance and Leadership Group agendas. TPK and/or WOCA could take the lead in educating and assuring the Groups around data and evidence for this work.

The findings revealed how the mindset required to work in this prototype space deviates from traditional public service practice.

The **skills and capabilities** that might support and enable officials to operate effectively in this space include:

- Understanding Whānau Ora as a philosophy and practice
- Understanding what strengths-based and whānau centred means in practice when supporting tamariki and whānau
- Understanding what it means to commission for outcomes and how this differs from a traditional procurement contract for services model.
- An openness to learn and be challenged (ongoing)
- Being comfortable with discomfort and not knowing all of the answers

- Trusting that Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency and Whānau Ora partners are carrying as much, if not more, risk than Crown agencies
- A risk appetite oriented towards opportunity and the counterfactual – i.e., what would happen for tamariki and whānau if we don't do this?
- Deprogramming from western policy frameworks and reprogramming using an indigenous lens and framework.

The **system** lessons were:

- the changes to the Public Service Act 2020 were formative which meant the process for enabling collaboration between agencies was not as straightforward as expected.
- the Public Finance Act and the legislative responsibilities that each agency has can be a barrier to agencies working collaboratively.
- staff at all levels (policy, procurement, administration) need to be brought on board early to understand the purpose and intent in order to enable this new way of working.
- the shift towards collaborative ways of working at the DCE level and doing whatever it takes is challenging to embed across different levels within agencies.
- Applying the right amount of pressure on agencies (e.g., short-term funding and timelines) helped get Ngā Tini Whetū off the ground.

The **operational** lessons

- Building interagency relationships and collaboration takes time and patience.
- New staff should be inducted to the broader kaupapa in order to fully understand that part of what is being tested is a new way of working across government.
- Paperwork and sign-off takes longer with four organisations involved.

Working in collaboration requires an ongoing process of listening, learning, discussion, negotiation, contestation, self-reflection, alignment and re/affirmation of agency expectations. Future government collaborations with kaupapa Māori and commissioning agencies need to build in longer lead times.

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## Appendix 1: Research Methodology

This research covers three focus areas and includes the following questions:

*Focus Area 1: The pathway to the partnership and where we are going from here.*

- How did we get to this point? What did it take to get here?
  - From idea and early conversations to inception and funding transferred and a joint agency agreed approach
  - Pathways to the government agencies working together; to WOCA working with non-TPK agencies. How did Ministers and agencies operate to get here?
  - What investment was required to get to this point? The funding journey to get to \$M transferred from Oranga Tamariki and ACC to TPK. What were the options that enabled this to happen? What were the barriers?
  - What investment was required to get to this point? The time and effort required of each agency to date, skills and experience?
  - What did it take to build relationships/how was this done? What worked well, what didn't?
- How and why has each agency's thinking evolved over the past year or so? For example, Oranga Tamariki's thinking has shifted both through direct involvement in the prototype but by wider organisational challenges and criticism that influences how we respond.
- Now that we are here, what are we trying to do, what are the outcomes we are trying to achieve and how do we think we are doing that – as agencies separately, then agencies collaboratively.

*Focus Area 2: Our (subjective) experiences*

- How is the last 12 months different from what and how we usually operate with master/servant relationship? What did it take to make this shift/how was it achieved?
- How have we shifted our thinking from an output-based contract to an outcomes based one? What have the implications been?

*Focus Area 3: The Whānau Ora philosophy and how each agency have come to understand it.*

- How do non-TPK agencies understand Whānau Ora. And what it means to hold whānau at the centre? How has non-TPK agency thinking changed in this respect?
- Learnings about how TPK and WOCA have helped facilitate a better understanding of whānau ora. How have TPK and WOCA needed to work differently with other agencies to enable that better understanding?



- And more generally, how has TPK needed to work differently to bring together agencies to work with them and with WOCA.
- Is working in silos or working collaboratively more effective for these types of prototypes/projects for whānau? What are the pros and cons?

### **Semi-structured interviews**

The researcher carried out face-to-face interviews with 15 participants and virtual interviews via zoom with seven participants to accommodate their availability. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed.

The majority of agency interviews were carried out in the Wellington CBD at the respective agency offices. Two Deputy Chief Executives agreed to be interviewed together.

The researcher travelled to West Auckland to spend one day at the WOCA office to interview staff. Two interviews involved two participants in each interview to maximise time.

## **Appendix 2: Interview Schedules – Government Agencies**

### **Mihimihi/rapport building**

- Introductions, explain research, informed consent, answer questions.
- Invite kōrero about role and responsibilities in Ngā Tini Whetū.

### **Assessing the pathway to partnership**

- What was the original intent of Ngā Tini Whetū and why was this important to your role/agency?
- The kaupapa is in its formative stages (i.e. one-year old), what did it take to get to this point?
  - How did Ministers and agencies operate to get here?
    - Probe: How did you get Ministerial and joint agency buy in?
  - What investment was required to get to this point?
    - Probe: The funding journey to get to \$M transferred from Oranga Tamariki and ACC to TPK. What were the options that enabled this to happen? What were the barriers?
  - What other resource and investment was required to get to this point?
    - Probe: What was the time and effort required of each agency to date, including skills and experience?
  - What did it take to build relationships/how was this done? What worked well, what didn't?
- How and why has each agency's thinking evolved over the past year? For example, Oranga Tamariki's thinking has shifted both through direct involvement in the prototype but by wider organisational challenges and criticism that influences how they respond.
- In your view, what are the next steps for Ngā Tini Whetū? What are the outcomes your agency wants to achieve and how? For example, as agencies separately, then collaboratively?

### **Assessing Ngā Tini Whetū implementation**

- How is the last 12 months different from what and how your agency/government usually operates? For example, master/servant relationship.
  - Probe: What did it take to make this shift/how was it achieved?
- To what extent has your agency/the government shifted in its thinking from an output-based contract to an outcomes based one? What have the implications been?

**Assessing the contribution of Ngā Tini Whetū to building understanding about Whānau Ora (Agencies and TPK)**

- (Non-TPK) How does your agency understand Whānau Ora? And what does it mean to hold whānau at the centre? How has your agency thinking changed in this respect?
- (TPK only) How have TPK and WOCA needed to work differently with other agencies to enable and support better understanding of Whānau Ora?
- (TPK only) How has TPK needed to work differently to bring together agencies to work with them and with WOCA.
- Is working in silos or working collaboratively more effective for these types of prototypes/projects for whānau? What are the pros and cons?

**Final Comments**

## **Appendix 3: Interview Schedules – Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency**

### **Mihimihi/rapport building**

- Introductions, explain research, informed consent, answer questions.
- Invite kōrero about role and responsibilities in Ngā Tini Whetū.

### **Assessing the pathway to partnership – intent and design**

- What was the intent of Ngā Tini Whetū and why was this important for WOCA?
- The kaupapa is in its formative stages (one-year old), what did it take to get to this point?
  - How did WOCA, Ministers and the three agencies operate to get here?
    - Probe: How did you approach working with Ministers and three different agencies?
  - What investment was required to get to this point?
    - Probe: The funding journey to get to \$M transferred from Oranga Tamariki and ACC to TPK. What were the options that enabled this to happen? What were the barriers?
  - What other resource and investment was required to get to this point?
    - Probe: What was the time and effort required of WOCA, including skills and experience?
  - What did it take to build relationships/how was this done? What worked well, what didn't?
- From your perspective to what extent has each agency's thinking evolved over the past year?
- In your view, what are the next steps for Ngā Tini Whetū? What are the outcomes WOCA wants to achieve and how?

### **Assessing Ngā Tini Whetū implementation**

- How is the last 12 months different from what and how WOCA usually operates?
  - Probe: What did it take to make this shift/how was it achieved?
- To what extent have agencies shifted in their thinking from an output-based contract to an outcomes based one? What have the implications been for WOCA?

**Assessing the contribution of Ngā Tini Whetū to building understanding about Whānau Ora (Agencies and TPK)**

- How has WOCA needed to work differently with agencies to enable and support better understanding of Whānau Ora?
- From your perspective, how has TPK needed to work differently to bring together agencies to work with you?
- Is working in silos or working collaboratively more effective for these types of prototypes/projects for whānau? What are the pros and cons?

**Final Comments**

#### Appendix 4: Research – Information Sheet

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What is the purpose of the research? The purpose of the research is to capture the learnings from key partners involved during the formative stages of Ngā Tini Whetū.

It's important to do this work because the Governance Group wants to document and understand the learnings from year one to improve future delivery.

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Who is conducting the research? The research is being conducted by:

- Dr Chelsea Grootveld – Ngaitai, Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau a Apanui, Whakatōhea, Tūhourangi. [chelsea.grootveld@gmail.com](mailto:chelsea.grootveld@gmail.com) +64 21 911 854
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How is information being gathered? Information will be gathered using semi structured interviews with key partners identified by the Working Group and Governance Group.

- The interviews will take approximately 35-40-minutes.
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What are the benefits of this research? The final report will demonstrate the lessons learnt for government agencies and the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency during the implementation of Ngā Tini Whetū to inform future delivery.

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What are my rights? It is your choice whether or not you wish to take part in the research. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to give a reason. Your relationship with Te Puni Kōkiri, ACC, Oranga Tamariki and Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency will not be harmed.

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to read and complete a consent form. The research team will also verbally outline your rights.

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Who do I contact with questions or concerns? If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr Chelsea Grootveld:  
Mobile: +64 21 911 854

Email: [chelsea.grootveld@gmail.com](mailto:chelsea.grootveld@gmail.com)

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## Appendix 5: Ngā Tini Whetū Research - Consent form

I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time.
- My name or identifying information will not be included in the evaluation without my permission. If I work for an organisation, the type of organisation I work for may be identified.
- My relationship with Te Puni Kōkiri, ACC, Oranga Tamariki and Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency will not be affected through my participation.
- With my permission, the discussion will be audio recorded, and may be transcribed.
- I have the right to request a copy of the audio or transcript of my discussion.
- Digital recordings, notes, and summaries will be stored securely at Aiko. Hard copies of stored information will be destroyed after three years.

I have read the information sheet and consent form and been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I give my consent to participate in this evaluation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_