



Summary of webinar

Together alone: joined-up social services

Friday 4 March 2022, 10.30-11.45am

Overview

The Productivity Commission asked consulting economist Julie Fry to review the recent progress of joined-up social service initiatives. The Commission held a webinar on Friday 4 March where Julie Fry presented the key findings from her review. The following panellists then shared their perspectives of what works and where Government could provide better support: Leslynne Jackson from Manaaki Tairāwhiti, Laura Black from Methodist Mission Southern and Sam Aberahama from NZ Police Tairāwhiti. Around 200 people joined the webinar. This note provides links to key resources mentioned during the webinar; a summary of the presentations from the three panellists; a selection of quotes from participants; an abridged transcript of the question and answer session; and anonymised comments made by the audience in the online chat.

1. Key links

- [Presentation slides – Julie Fry](#)
- [Recording of the webinar](#)
- [Report - Together alone: joined-up social services](#)
- [About the *Fair chance for all* inquiry](#)
- [Manaaki Tairāwhiti](#)
- [Methodist Mission Southern](#)
- [Human learning systems](#) - A compilation of resources for people interested in exploring the Human Learning Systems approach to leading, funding and managing all forms of social intervention and public service.
- [Tamarack Institute](#) - Develop and support collaborative strategies that engage citizens and institutions to solve major community issues across Canada and beyond. Lots on evaluation of collective impact initiatives.
- [He Ara Waiora](#) - A framework that helps the Treasury to understand waiora, often translated as a Māori perspective on wellbeing.
- [Ken Warren article, A new model of collaboration](#) - Outlines five design principles to guide the development of a new collective model as a separate but connected system in the New Zealand public sector. The proposed model would help draw citizens, iwi, NGOs and others into more collaborative and constructive relationships with the government to pursue the resolution of the most complex and important challenges our country faces.

2. Summary

Leslyne and Sam from Manaaki Tairāwhiti talked about the purpose for their collective as 'enabling whānau to flourish' and having more influence over the way government contracting happens in their community. They spoke about building a 'learning system' where whānau voice – what whānau aspire to and what they need right now – is at the heart of everything and is used to guide their responses. A system that uses evidence and raises up whānau voice to inform leaders and helps them make more effective decisions. They have developed a way of working that is focused more on prevention - devoid of targets, criteria and screening processes, as these only serve to leave people until they are desperate. They have proven they are a trusted partner, capable of prioritising whānau wellbeing. They also spoke about how they have integrated social services, economic and environmental issues under the same governance and model. They spoke about the fundamental importance of building trust with whānau and not waiting for government to solve issues for us.

Laura from Methodist Mission Southern spoke about the importance of 'sticking to your knitting' and knowing what it is you want to do and what you don't want to do and using research and evidence to understand what works. She also spoke about the need to centre the client's view of what does and does not work and to have stable funding to enable an innovation approach to be taken. She reiterated the need to have services as integrated as possible to reduce the time, financial, cognitive and dignity costs for whānau of accessing services.

From the question-and-answer session and the comments in the chat from the audience, the following points were well supported:

- We should be focused on enabling whānau to flourish, not second guessing what it is we think they need.
- We don't need to have hard criteria or tick boxes to determine if someone has 'high and complex' needs. It's about understanding their needs and responding to those. We don't have to be gatekeepers.
- There is a limited role for sharing of personal data across agencies, but it is deficit-based and backward looking. A more fruitful approach is forward looking and seeks to understand what the person or whānau needs now by truly listening to them.
- We need to apply 'system thinking' and train our people in this. The support of business coaches is needed.
- Whānau trust us, so (government/Ministers) should too.
- It's not about technology or data, it's about control and having a different relationship with government.
- Having a central agency take the burden off all others is not going to work. They all need to be paying attention.
- We need to be measuring what matters to whānau to assess effectiveness and inform ongoing monitoring. Are whānau getting what they need without needing assistance to navigate a complex system?
- We should be looking at simplifying the system. Joining up services is not necessarily the first best response. The need for 'navigators' is a sign that the system is not working optimally.
- We need to be looking at the effectiveness of mainstream services and scaling down or de-funding things that aren't working.
- While there seems to be an appetite within the public sector to support more collaborative approaches, this is constantly undermined by routines and practices that were established in the 1980s and 1990s - short-term contracting, accountability overload, competition for staff and funding in NGOs. These things are hardwired into the day-to-day practices of government.

3. Participant quotes

We are not waiting for government to solve this for us. We are getting on with it. We are owning it, we are leading it, and we are connecting right across sectors. We try to be pono, to be true to why we are here. Not who we are and where we come from and what status we hold, but why we are here, to enable our whānau to flourish.

There are worlds of powerful information about people's lives that has been missed because we do not collectively have a reliable, consistent, widely used way of hearing the clients' experience of their reality. The IDI has some potential, but it is deficit focused and it atomizes social capital.

Governments like to do things that they are comfortable with. This is new, it's creative, it's coming from communities, it's coming from whānau. And these are not sources that government is used to listening to. And it can be uncomfortable to be told something that doesn't fit with what your expectations are.

I would hesitate getting hung up on the technology. I think we have all the technology that we need. That is easy enough to commission and build and insert. It's about having the will to do things. The issue is also about control. I am personally very happy for government to be significantly involved, they have deep pockets, they have a democratic mandate, but it's the desire to control everything in a single direction that is the most complicating factor. So, a central government that came to the discussions with a will to learn and listen and to grow alongside, would be a manifestly different partner, than the one we most frequently encounter. I don't think getting a single government agency to take the burden off all of the others by paying attention is perhaps the best way forward. They all need to be paying attention.

We have a very high threshold for interrogating new services and a very low threshold for those that are already in the baseline. And that is something the Commission talked about in its More effective social services inquiry (2015). It would be great to see a little bit of that blow torch effect coming through this inquiry as well. You can't move resources from ineffective to effective uses if you are not determining how effective the mainstream services are.

We think that data can be extraordinarily powerful. The problem is that we have data flowing in one direction with a really narrow focus, and the first thing that it does is silences whānau. You sit with a whānau and you say I've got two hours to spend with you on budget advice, you don't hear of all the other things that are going on in their lives. You don't hear about what is really important to them and what is really material to them. And so we wind up blinding and deafening ourselves all the way through the process in this kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. We have got to hear the voices of the people that we are trying to work with in their full richness - what is the most important thing that they want to do right now, what do they have energy for, what do they think will make a difference and how do they think that should work.

Someone in the chat said, "Having navigators and advocates doing work-arounds is a tragic haemorrhaging of energy that ought to be directed to other activities directly related to improving whānau wellbeing". What I wanted to leave us with is the sense that if we need these workarounds, it's a sign that the system isn't working and what we are all looking for is systems change. These are coping mechanisms; these are not solutions.

4. Abridged transcript

Manaaki Tairāwhiti, Leslyne Jackson

The purpose of Manaaki Tairāwhiti is enabling all whānau to flourish. Our goals are to positively impact on the key social areas in our region: housing, family violence, child wellbeing, addiction. And we also want to have more influence over the way that government contracting happens in our community.

The methods that we use: we rely on building up our local leadership, using innovation and applying systems thinking. And the measures that we use: predominantly whānau voice, understanding the needs of whānau, agencies' responses to whānau, what barriers they encounter. And we try to use evidence, always, to inform our leaders to help them make greater and more effective decisions.

When the Manaaki Tairāwhiti group came together, it was the iwi leadership that brought everyone together. And they asked us to put whānau at the heart of everything that we do. They asked us to make change based on what whānau need us to do better. And we asked ourselves, how do we listen to the voices of whānau? How do we understand their experiences from their perspective without overlaying our own judgement? Or our own rules? And how do we ask ourselves if whānau are experiencing barriers and getting what they need, then how do we understand the impact of those barriers? And how do we help whānau to achieve their individual aspirations and at the same time, create a learning system that can raise up the collective whānau voices while protecting their right to privacy? How can we study barriers in the current systems for delivering support, so that we can better understand how they work? How can we validate or myth bust barriers when they arise? And can we test doing things differently and scale the power of our good ideas locally.

Most importantly, the iwi leadership and the local social sector leaders who come together voluntarily to lead Manaaki Tairāwhiti, wanted to understand the real needs of whānau as it's happening in our community right now. So we need to provide them with real-time evidence of the things that are working well and the things that aren't working so well. So we can have those hard conversations.

Manaaki has been busy over the last five years building an evidence base using those whānau voices that we've been entrusted with, testing our capacity to partner with our providers in the community, our iwi and NGO providers, trialling a way of working that is devoid of targets, criteria and screening processes which serve to leave people until they are desperate. We know that we should help people as early as we can, as soon as they ask. We provide and we're proving that we are a trusted partner that's capable of prioritising whānau wellbeing. And we're preparing for the greater devolution of decision rights and resources for our region so that we can achieve our purpose.

Methodist Mission Southern, Laura Black

Methodist Mission Southern provides youth transition housing and early childhood education services in Otago and Southland and build tools at the intersection of education, executive functioning and IT for broader use. We're currently involved in a number of collaborative projects. Our largest is Engage, which has a major research arm, a formal relationship with the University of Otago and Erans, 150 early childhood education centres, and three Kahui Ako communities of learning. But we're also involved in a project with Animation Research Limited, and the Department of Corrections and a commercial software provider.

For us, the first successful enabler was sticking to our knitting, knowing what it is that we wanted to do and what we didn't want to do. Next, we have focused on the future and what actually works. And finally, we have been astonishingly lucky with our staff, given what we pay.

For the last decade, our focus has been finding other providers, funders and system actors who are interested in three things. First, the centering of the client's view of the system and what works and what

doesn't. This means using client derived monitoring data, board-based engagement and a heavy orientation towards research and evidence-backed tools. And as an organisation building new tools, we have sought stable funding pathways for innovation.

Like it or not, government dominates the sector providing two thirds of the funding but also controlling accreditation, and workforce standards. If we're here to do better, then we need a way for that better to be trialled, tested, refined, integrated into existing practice and built with a scalable robustness.

How do bright ideas, research discoveries and the insufficiently trusted wisdom of those who lead and know their communities' step into ongoing government support?

There are worlds of powerful information about people's lives that has been missed, because we do not collectively have a reliable, consistent, widely used way of hearing the clients' experience of their reality. The IDI has some potential, but it's deficit focused and it atomizes social capital.

Getting the clients lived experience into policy so that design decisions are informed by the reality would make a huge difference. Lastly, from our perspective, if we could arrange how we collectively do the work so that it is as a matter of first principle, integrated from the perspective of those we are trying to help, we may be able to solve for some of the problems of limited pockets. But more importantly, we could drastically reduce the time, financial, cognitive and dignity costs to whānau of accessing assistance.

Sam Aberahama, Police Commander Tairāwhiti

I am the police commander here for Tairāwhiti and I'm part of Manaaki Tairāwhiti, a social governance board which is iwi led. And we have all our regional leaders connected to that. The difference that we are trying to take us forward is truly setting your priorities – housing, tamariki, family harm, addiction - coordinating our effort - but also connecting up with our economic board and our environmental board. So there is a whole lot of stuff going on in the economic space about employment and training, and a whole lot of stuff in the environmental space, and bringing that all together. That has been really beneficial for us. Rau Tipu Rau Ora is our board that is co-chaired by our Mayor and our iwi. That is a work in progress that came about as a result of Covid two years ago, but we saw opportunities to really build on that. So regional commissioning is where we want to get to. Building trust with whānau in need is huge for us. Until such time as whānau trusts us, they will only tell us what we want to hear. They will work the system. Building the trust, breaking down those barriers and enabling whānau to flourish is a nice phrase, but actually what does that mean? Waking up and smiling, getting through crisis, having a plan in life, working through that plan and actually flourishing and achieving and seeing it in the wairua of our whānau is huge. And we have examples of that coming through. Point of difference, we are not waiting for government to solve this for us. We are getting on with it. We are owning it, we are leading it, and we connecting right across sectors. We were very siloed from the economic space and the environmental space, so we are more coordinated in that effort. It is a work in progress, it takes a lot of hearts and minds and discipline. There are a number of challenges that come along the way. We collect those and try to understand those and we try to be pono, to be true to why we are here. Not who we are and where we come from and what status we hold, but why we are here, to enable our whānau to flourish.

5. Questions and answers

Q1. Why is it so extraordinarily difficult to rollout these proven ideas out more widely and get government buy-in? How can we get more government buy-in or get government out of the way?

[Laura] There have been no shortage of fantastic trials, pilots. No shortage of catalyst, ambition, tenacity. It's what happens next?

[Leslynne] It's about getting the balance right between which functions of government need to be centralised and which functions of delivery of services are better devolved to regions and communities. Because we have proven time and time again that we can be trusted to do this. We can be trusted to hear the voices of whānau without adding our own judgement or layers of expectations over that and get resourcing to where it needs to go. So I think it's a conversation that central government needs to have. When will they be ready for taking bolder steps towards greater devolution, trusting iwi more and trusting local communities more?

[Sam] We have had a number of Ministers and opposition members come to Tairāwhiti to come and see what we are doing. We tell them that we are not waiting, we are getting on with it. We believe we have done the work. We have collected whānau voice, there are some clear themes coming through. We don't want anyone to get in our way. Whānau trust us, so you should trust us too.

[Julie] What Leslynne is picking up there too, is the issue of risk. Governments like to do things that they are comfortable with. This is new, it's creative, it's coming from communities, it's coming from whānau. And these are not sources that government is used to listening to. And it can be uncomfortable to be told something that doesn't fit with what your expectations are. So one of the key things that the report talks about is how you demonstrate what works. That is a real challenge. Showing people in ways that they can trust at the centre that these things do actually work.

[Andrew] Hopefully there is some kind of critical mass. Some kind of tipping point if enough people come to places like Manaaki Tairāwhiti and the like. Hopefully over time we get things across the board. But it is certainly hard.

Q2. What are high and complex needs?

[Leslynne] The work that we are doing in community is listening to what whānau want and trying to meet their needs as they arise. So, for us it is not so much about having an assessment or having a framework that determines whether a person's needs are 'high' or 'complex' but actually looking at the whole picture and understanding what the needs are and the order and the way that whānau need services to respond. And it is being able to use whānau's capability and permission to bring agencies together to bring agencies together collectively when that is appropriate. But also mitigating that whānau feel that is inherent in giving information that can be used against them, perhaps in the future. So again it is a delicate, balanced, tailored and individual to each person. Rather than setting up an assessment that says, if you have enough ticks in enough boxes you qualify as high and complex and we will trigger a range of support packages around you at that point.

[Sam] Can I also add that we have looked at our systems. We have a piece of work around our systems improvement. It's unreal what is going on across some of our internal systems, across sectors. We have had a really good look at that to try and understand that and we are doing a whole lot of testing of that. Because the system, be it a process, a policy, a law is a huge barrier for our whānau. And we are challenging centrally around where the barrier is and what we are going to do to change the system to better support whānau.

Q3. What functions sit best with central government and which parts are best placed to do them?

[Laura] I would hesitate getting hung up on the technology. I think we have all the technology that we need. That is easy enough to commission and build and insert. It's about having the will to do things. The issue is also about control. I am personally very happy for government to be significantly involved, they have deep pockets, they have a democratic mandate, but it's the desire to control everything in a single direction that is the most complicating factor. So a central government that came to the discussions with a will to learn and listen and to grow alongside, would be a manifestly different partner, than the one we most frequently encounter. I don't think getting a single government agency to take the burden off all of the others by paying attention is perhaps the best way forward. They all need to be paying attention.

[Leslynn] From the perspective of the navigator part of the work that Manaaki is supporting in our community, we are not sure about the value of government agencies swapping deficit data held in different parts of government. We are not sure that truly adds value to understanding the aspirations and the opportunities to scaffold and lift up whānau. We think that the best way of knowing how to do that is by listening and truly understanding and then acting on that. Rather than trawling back through data about the history of people and their interactions with various parts of government. Sure, it will have some value for some people in some situations, but not always. And I think when it comes to which parts should stay in central government and which parts should be more localised, it is not necessarily the functions of government agencies and what they deliver. Sometimes it's the bit that falls between. So, for example, I know of a situation where a person was sentenced by the court to go to addictions counselling when the person said, 'I don't have an addiction, I have an anger problem, but I can't go to anger management because I haven't assaulted my partner yet'. So how do communities have the ability to say, the rules say you only qualify for that and you don't qualify for that. But the common-sense and the responsible thing to do is to give the person access to the service that they have asked for. So, I think those are the kinds of examples where we should be devolving the ability for government agencies at the local level to be more flexible in what they deliver and how, and interfacing with community organisations that can bring those voices to the table. Those things definitely need to be at our end.

Q4. If we are going to have a system that works well, we are going to need to be able to identify the bits that are working well and funnel more resources to them, and to scale down and de-fund over times services that aren't working, or providers who are not working effectively. So yes trust, but trust with monitoring. Can you talk a bit more about whether it is possible to monitor and evaluate in that way? Is it happening well enough? What are the barriers to it happening?

[Leslynn] I think we need to pay particular attention to what gets measured. So what is evaluated is what is measured. And while government contracts determine what gets measured, volumes, people that hit the tariff to qualify for service and so on, we are limiting our view. I think that if we are evaluating what matters to whānau, what matters to them are the issues that are going on in their lives right now, whether they can get the help that they need without a PhD to navigate a complex system, whether they can get it with or without the need of an advocate, whether they get a better deal if they have someone with them because they don't feel that they are listened to our trusted when they go to access support that they are entitled to. So I think understanding how to measure what matters to whānau and then evaluate the effectiveness of government and community organisations to meet what matters to whānau would be a more robust way of understanding whether we are having the impacts that we really truly believe that we should be having.

[Julie] If I can just pick up on your comment about scaling down and de-funding things that don't work. One of the issues that really struck me when working on the paper, was looking at the amount of attention that has been given to Whānau Ora relative to its budget. There has been an Auditor General's review, a review in 2018 and several other reviews that I wrote about. And relative to the mainstream organisations that get billions of dollars and barely any attention on their services, who have an organisation that is innovating, and of course when you are doing things differently, the chances of it not being perfect every time are higher. You are not just following your way through. But we have a very high threshold for interrogating new services and a very low threshold for those that are already in the baseline. And that is something the Commission talked about in its More effective social services inquiry (2015). It would be great to see a little bit of that blow torch effect coming through this inquiry as well. You can't move resources from ineffective to effective uses if you are not determining how effective the mainstream services are.

[Laura] We think that data can be extraordinarily powerful. The problem is that we have data flowing in one direction with a really narrow focus, and the first thing that it does is silences whānau. You sit with a whānau and you say I've got two hours to spend with you on budget advice, you don't hear of all the other things that are going on in their lives. You don't hear about what is really important to them and what is really

material to them. And so we wind up blinding and deafening ourselves all the way through the process in this kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. We have got to hear the voices of the people that we are trying to work with in their full richness - what is the most important thing that they want to do right now, what do they have energy for, what do they think will make a difference and how do they think that should work. Rather than being driven by senior level thinking that thinks, 'we have a financial literacy issue, let's plunk some money into it'. That's never going to generate a beneficial result that drives and supports whānau resiliency.

Q5. How do you find people who are good at building trust, walking alongside people? Do we have enough of them? Do they need formal training?

[Leslynn] I also want bring into this a comment that I saw pop up about work arounds. Yes it's true that people working as navigators encounter government agency barriers to support and they do work around it. The reason for that is that they can't change government policy. If you work for an NGO you can't go and ask Corrections to change one of their policies. But what we have done is try our hardest to create a learning system, so the barriers that come from whānau and collected by navigators is passed through to an operational leadership group of local managers in all of our agencies. Who can do that myth busting process or who can raise the curiosity in their agencies to do more to understand those barriers. Then we can bring balanced recommendations to our governance board from the local leadership group that says whānau told us this, your people have looked at the problem and have said, yay or nay or it looks like this, and here are some recommendations of what you could do to escalate that or ask yourselves questions about how you can do more to address those barriers. So I think it's not so much about focusing on the workarounds because that is the 'cheat sheet', it's about recognising opportunities for systemic change and having information passed to leaders who can then act on it. And so it takes a lot to build the capability of people who can work as navigators to be able to understand how systems work and recognise whether things are barriers or one-offs or just someone having a bad day. But that is why we have supervisors and coaches. And we are incredibly indebted to the business coaches who have coached our people on systems thinking and how to apply that across systems.

[Laura] It is not the individual in the room working with the whānau by themselves. They have got a whole group of people around them and behind them supporting them, helping them stay safe, helping them stay focused. One of the big learnings for us has been that no one practitioner is great with all of the clients. There is some magic to be had there even amongst the most skilled and abled and trained up folk, that sometimes it just doesn't jell. And you have to find them somebody else to work with because it's all about what works for the whānau. So it is more of an art than a science, but I think you need that praxis. The practitioner often doesn't realise they are not a good fit. We use a tool called PCom/Fit that gives us client derived information about how they think it is going with the practitioner. Has a very good evidence base behind it and tells us if we are on track in terms of that alliance between us and the people we are trying to help.

Q6. Rather than navigators could we not just make the system simpler? Are the changes from the Public Service Act likely to change to commissioning of social services and the way that regional commissioners operate likely to help?

[Sam] This has been a real journey for regional leaders, coming together and grappling with what whānau voice means. That has really led to a different understanding amongst our regional leaders three years ago. Where there is a will, there is always a way. So if you are open to understanding whānau voice and what all of this means, get on the journey with the rest of us. We do come from different backgrounds and different agencies and sectors but coming together has been a huge learning opportunity for us all. It has had its share of challenges - we come to the meeting, we hear and say one thing and then we go back to our day job and do the opposite. So that in itself has been challenging, but we have also held each other to account. Information sharing, we have really challenged each other. But what we are seeing is that we have a strong network of regional leaders who have come together, we have good workforce development

underneath and we are all connected. What we are doing regionally is really important. We are trying to push up things nationally to DCEs. We are trying to walk the talk in making the change.

Q7. What about local government, how involved are they? What role do or should they play?

[Leslynn] The mayor sits on the governance group and one example of how we have partnered with Council is the delivery of Mayors Taskforce for Jobs which we have taken some responsibility for influencing the operation of that. But also in the sphere of housing. Manaaki Tairāwhiti employed a strategic advisor who has worked closely with Council and all other stakeholders to bring together our understanding of what is happening with housing, as we need to know how long and how deep the housing crisis in our region is and what we can do about it and how we can influence change. So, at that level, it is about partnering with local government and about bringing together as many of the key stakeholders, maybe private developers, iwi, Council, or others so that say that Kāinga Ora or doing this, iwi are doing that, and in our region we can hopefully better predict what the needs are for housing and the responses from across our community. We need to take a leadership role in understanding that and making sure that we stay on track.

[Laura] Our experience is that it is incredibly uneven. We straddle about half a dozen local authorities. I am fearful with the local government elections at the end of the year there will be a swing away from community interests and more towards financial ones. But I do think the review of local government and whatever happens with Three Waters is a massive opportunity for us to try and get in there and try have our voice heard and get stuff built into the new legislation that may make that a more even playing field.

[Julie] This is not comment on local government but I just want to tautoko the point that Catherine (in the chat) made about 'having navigators and advocates doing work arounds is a tragic haemorrhaging of energy that ought to be directed to other activities directly related to improving whānau wellbeing'. What I wanted to leave us with is the sense that if we need these workarounds, it's a sign that they system isn't working and what we are all looking for is systems change. These are coping mechanisms; these are not solutions.

6. Participant comments in the online chat

What plans, if any, are being considered to account for the needs of neurodiverse/dyslexia people - who are largely invisible and therefore ignored?

I'm part of a NZ collective impact collaborative, Equally Well. We also have Housing First, ... we have also conducted an evaluation of our collective impact collaborative and I believe there are others, as several of us work alongside the Tamarack Institute in North America as we learn more about CI methodology.

The other factor from Tipu Matoro ki te ao (Whānau Ora review, 2018) was the description of systemic racism; sector silo thinking and the ways in which innovation was being stifled by what the report described as the culture of The Terrace. Music to my ears. Systems-level problems that were agreed to and articulated in the 2018 review of Whānau Ora - and as yet no solutions are provided.

āe, I was just going to make that kind of point: [Te Tihi | Whānau Ora - Home; Home | growing Ruapehu learners, Creators & Leaders. \(ruapehuhub.com\)](#) and buckets more. The point maybe is when will Cen Gov recognise and resource these approaches as one of the legitimate ways of addressing the big, wicked challenges out there? And that includes the governance arrangements to make them effective (a committee of CEs is not sufficient).

I like this from a [webinar](#) on the skills and attitudes needed for backbone (BB) organisations and kaimahi working in BB teams: 'BB organisations are created to disrupt the inequitable status quo in our community'.

So far this is nothing new ... I have heard these 'findings' many times over the past 20 years. For transformation to happen, the focus needs to shift from 'collaboration' to creating opportunities for whānau to lead.

Tautoko. How many more inquiries are needed to agree that whānau are best equipped to identify their own solutions; and that agencies need to refocus their funding to support whānau self-determination.

Tautoko. Previous enquiry on more effective social services had many ideas on what we could do but seems to have been ignored.

One problem is the lack of political will to do what's obviously needed. Where's the 'whole of Govt'/ holistic wellbeing governance & partnering with affected flaxroots / communities strategy?

I hear your frustration. There might be, might, some assistance in the upcoming CERF - Climate Emergency Response Fund (budget this year). [Budget 2022 to boost health and climate action | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

Tamarack is a partner agency with Inspiring Communities (Aotearoa based) that supports community led development. Grassroots - Hapori / whānau led change.

Question: To what extent can decentralisation of social services involve local government - thinking about the current review of the future for local governance?

Question: How does the current public finance system affect how social services are designed and governed? Or is the issue more about how agencies currently relate and behave with each other, regardless of funding boundaries?

Kia ora koutou - FYI here is some of Treasury's work about trying to understand wellbeing from a te ao Māori perspective. Early days obviously and much more to do. Happy to connect with anyone out there who is interested - workload and Omicron permitting!! [He Ara Waiora \(treasury.govt.nz\)](#)

I wouldn't want Treasury doing measurement of mana and relationships, rather those in government that are themselves part of the relationship. See [Policy Quarterly \(victoria.ac.nz\)](#) I'd see Treasury's role more as a system steward.

MSD often fund organisations with "hooks" such as requiring social services to adhere to overly-administrative systems with rigid rules, or insisting that groups administer the MSD needs assessment to gather information for MSD. This approach is really unhelpful yet to date MSD are highly resistant to changing their approach. How can this report address this sort of controlling attitude and behaviour by govt ministries?

WAI 262 Flora & Fauna report (which released its report in 2011) and Wai 2575 Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry (which released its stage One report 2019) cover a lot of these issues. Are their findings and recommendations being integrated into this dialogue?

Question: What could be the role of the Social Wellbeing Agency to build a system that can gather and allow the collation of qualitative community experiences of services?

It's all very well for funders to provide funding for services, but when the services are defined and constrained by the funder, the services don't meet the needs of the people who are seeking support.

In my view, the principle barrier to progress has been the issue of managing risk. Ministers know that they will be held politically responsible for the action of organisations that they fund. They will therefore always want to have a say in what it done and how. Organisations, likewise, may also be unwilling to accept the risk of services not achieving their intended effect and thus having to redo the work without additional funding.

Agree. This goes to a ground level fear of 'getting it wrong' or being left with responsibility. We need more cross sector training.

1988 Puaoteata-Tu gave similar recommendations and also did some predictions for our youth at that time (34 years ago) The government didn't listen then but if you look at our statistics now? What do they look like 34 years later? This on its own should reinforce the need to make the systemic changes that are required. Institutional racism was highlighted then and what's changed today? Kia kaha koutou ngaa kaimahi e mahi ana te mahi. Mauri ora ki a koutou

Joined up services can be just a more potent form of colonisation. Why do we spend all this energy to join up agencies with out having the hard conversation around colonising practice. Laura - highlighted the importance of whānau driving the change.

How do we tackle the risk averseness and how do we do more for tamariki? These are often linked, fear of risk means we do less for tamariki. Most all reports have shown we aren't doing enough for our young people.

Managing risk in a political system driven by anecdote is greatly underestimated. We have a justice system that has made remarkable changes in keeping 17-25 year old man out of prison, but the same willingness with risk is not seen in child removals or offender rehabilitation with older males. Secondly this takes time. Youth justice has been the focus of departments, judges, police for well over 20 years. Pity the fact that this is probably the best example of joined up agencies stays under the radar. Of course whānau and other community initiatives have been really critical here. Ironically, ethnic bias is unchanged so we do not have all the answers here.

Does "joined up services" limit our thinking about doing things differently, lead by community and designed differently, not merely "connected"?

Give people the option to allocate our taxes to initiatives we'd rather fund, because the Govt's actions = a mixed bag of results.

Question: How can we ensure community specialist NGO's are resourced to participate and partner with what has to date been predominantly Govt agency led collaborative initiatives? We need more community-led innovation. It is welcomed that we now have a family violence and sexual violence strategy and action plan that speaks to this ... I welcome working collaboratively with Govt to see the implementation.

The answer is in the DNA of Gov, it requires a change in hearts and minds and AGREEMENT that it is legitimate and to be NUTURED, not piloted, experimented with, have a new announcement and programme. It is about POWER and who exercises it. Scotland talks about the 'enabling state', Finland about 'humble gov'. These are the fundamental shifts.

The identified approaches for 'what works' could be summed up as; whānau centric, te Tiriti centric, and Iwi centric. Is this correct?

āe, it accords with Māori kaupapa, but also Pasifika and all people if only it was enabled.

Not just centred, but whānau, hapu, iwi me hāpori Māori led, with power, decision-making and putea controlled by Māori. This is tino rangatiratanga. Crown agencies, policy, strategy and implementation must be driven by Te Tiriti, and Crown must meet their obligations under Te Tiriti as good Treaty partners and stewards of systems (article I/ partnership) with responsibility for enabling Māori to exercise authority over their lives (article II/ tino rangatiratanga) and achieve equitable outcomes for Māori (article III/ equity, options) in ways that enable Māori to live, thrive and flourish as Māori (ritenga Māori declaration/ active protection).

Far from having answers on how to turn this around but in over 30 years in public service decisions have been vastly more centralised. Trust locals more including public servants in regions. The answers matter to them and they will grow better decisions if entrusted with this.

Govt is scared that devolved services won't be perfect. It would be helpful if they admitted that their provision of services is not only not perfect but actually harmful.

3 year election cycles, risk averse and general low trust of flexible approaches, especially when those approaches exist outside of Wellington. Any programme I have been involved with that challenges these usually has to fly under the radar accordingly.

Joining up 'which services'... joining up services people still don't want...???. we need to be careful that 'joined up social services' is not the new language for 'navigation' where we are investing in navigating people to services they don't want (didn't need a navigator, they already knew they were there but didn't want to use them! I'm deliberately being disruptor but I hope that makes sense.

I encourage everyone to engage in the Govt consultation on UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' implementation in Aotearoa - not a silver bullet, but would apply more pressure to do the right thing. <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/whakamahia/un-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

If you haven't already can I suggest people here take a look at this, [Human Learning Systems](#) we have a small crew of public servants in NZ and Australia trying to work in this manner it would be good if we had more.

My tuakana is on a mirimiri roadshow of the South Island right now! She's fought the system pretty much the whole way to build her Team of mirimiri practitioners - it's appalling and disgusting the level of resistance to get affordable treatments to our whānau. <https://www.manawaora.org/booking>

Some centralisation is inevitable but should be based more on manaakitanga and kotahitanga? More trust of iwi, hapū and communities definitely needed. This has been shown through the pandemic response - [He Kāhui Waiora: Living Standards Framework and He Ara Waiora COVID-19: Impacts on Wellbeing \(DP 20/02\) \(treasury.govt.nz\)](#).

Worth looking at this too: [Welcome to Regeneration | Project Regeneration](#) Focused on climate change, but saying to address 'climate' we have to address human needs - indigenous knowledge critical to this.

<https://taci.org.au/journal/when-love-meets-power/> an interesting piece to read - related to all of our work

While there seems to be an appetite within the public sector to support more collaborative approaches, this is constantly undermined by routines and practices that were established in the 1980s and 1990s - short-term contracting, accountability overload, competition for staff and funding in NGOs. These things are hardwired into the day-to-day practices of government. Where are the best examples *within* the public sector of reducing and/or removing these impediments?

[Northland mental health programme supports wellbeing, identity and mana through employment - NZ Herald](#)

Teaching commissioners how to be good at commissioning would be a good start.

Central government should be involved where: horizontal equity is important, there is a clear intervention logic and there are economies of scale. Paying cash transfer is the clearest example.

"If you want to be heard, listen"

Question: Given the significant redesign of the health system underway, how is the Productivity Commission's work feeding into this process?

The control functions of government/ policy reflect the colonising function of government/ policy. He Puapua offers some ways forward to how governance can be.

We need to unpack what we mean by the word 'service'. If we shift to a 'relationship' approach that is based in a belief in the expertise and insights that the person / whānau wanting the change brings ... then we move beyond a 'service' driven approach.

I'd also put more into prevention - if we had a better school curriculum that empowered youth to understand their human rights (including civic rights and obligations) and how effectively to defend them and engage as an actively responsible citizen, they could apply more pressure to keep the State accountable when designing and implementing services, and when protecting and realising human rights, including to quality health services, housing, justice, education...everything.

Collective Impact initiative: [Equally Well | Physical health equity | Te Pou](#) 120+ organisations working together across Aotearoa to support physical health equity for tāngata whai ora (people experiencing mental health and addiction issues).. using collective impact methodology and distributed leadership, government and NGOs... shared goal across diverse partners... lived experience driven.

Yes - what gets measured is important ... and also who makes sense of the data. The 'making sense' is the critical step and mostly this is done by professionals removed from the experience. The same set of data can trigger different insights from different groups of people.

The idea of 'navigators' suggests giving up - just have to work around the obstacles. They should only ever be a step to 'cultivators' whose task is to create a whole new garden. They need to be in public/private/third sector, learning how and supporting change.

Yes, instead of "navigators" could just make the system simpler and easier for people to get support?? Instead of all these barriers designed to keep people out (downside to "targeted" support is that it excludes people who don't meet the predetermined requirements).

Navigator / Advocates' "Work-arounds" are a tragic hemorrhaging of energy that ought to be directed to other activities directly related to improving whānau wellbeing.

There is also the current review of Whānau Ora by the Office of the Auditor-General.

Political scrutiny of Whānau Ora was also a factor in its early days.

One of the things about Whānau Ora, in its early days at least, was mismatch of data expectations between Commissioning Agencies and Central Govt? Commissioning agencies wanted to measure things of importance to each whānau - this info couldn't always be aggregated up in ways that central govt wanted. That's my memory of it, anyway.

TSY baseline reviews should be exercises in outcome evaluation, not just looking at what is spent and on what.

Data is about what is being asked and who is asking and for what purpose?, we need to look at what is not being asked or measured. How do we measure cultural identity and growth, which is a 101?

Question: You mentioned that most of the time when an accident happens people share information, but we should build capacity to work more preventatively. Could you please clarify it. What is the best way to focus more on prevention? How should we have a picture of the issue before it happen or collect data?

Thank you!

The resources of the country are limited. We have to find a practical way of spending money where it will be most effective. I am hearing a lot of examples where more resources will help people. How about examples of things that we should stop doing, to free up resources for things that will.

IPCC report (and the wicked problems on many fronts) means that everything we are talking about is *urgent* we can change faster than we might think, but we have to have start. Can't wait for another report.

Productivity Commission, JOIN US ALL UP, this discussion and seminar is full of passion, knowledge and committed people. I would be very happy to join with others who are participating in this to keep sharing and exchanging - if you write to us all after this, you can get our permission and then you have a brilliant pool of experience to draw on for your report. You can be one of the Hubs for exchange - and isn't that one of the possible ways of doing things differently?