Appendix C  Case study: Whānau Ora

Key points

- The Government launched the Whānau Ora initiative in 2010, in response to a report from the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives. Whānau Ora is the flagship policy for social service delivery to Māori, but it is not the only such policy initiative – many iwi and Māori social services operate outside of Whānau Ora. Whānau Ora also includes a Pasifika focus.

- Whānau ora, as a service delivery practice approach, is about working with whānau to identify their strengths and aspirations, assisting them to eventually move to a level of wellbeing where they no longer require assistance from external social service providers.

- Along with other iwi and Māori social services, the principles of the Whānau Ora initiative trace their history to earlier Māori development initiatives.

- Whānau Ora has had two distinct phases of operation.
  - Phase one from 2010 to about mid-2014 focused on the establishment of collectives of service providers, the introduction of navigator staff to assist whānau, and administration of a Whānau Integration, Innovation, and Engagement (WIIIE) fund to assist whānau to develop whānau plans.
  - Phase two from early-2014 transferred Whānau Ora funding to three non-government commissioning agencies (who can commission services from a wider range of organisations than just the provider collectives).

- The establishment and implementation of Whānau Ora provides a number of lessons for the social services inquiry:
  - *When devolving commissioning, the stewardship role needs to be clearly allocated:* Decentralising Te Puni Kōkiri’s commissioning function has opened up a gap in the leadership of Whānau Ora. Although some responsibility for stewarding the Whānau Ora system appears to have been allocated between TPK and the Partnership group, these responsibilities do not amount to the active and comprehensive stewardship discussed in the inquiry report.
  - *The culture of commissioning agencies is an important consideration in establishing programmes focused on empowering individuals and families:* The organisational culture within the commissioning agencies appears to be significantly different to the culture within government purchasers, particularly with regards to their attitudes on what can be done, how soon it can be done, how it can be done and how measurable the outcomes would be. This is likely to make the commissioning agencies more responsive than the average government purchaser.
  - *Balancing autonomy and connectedness:* Whānau Ora has benefited from having time to develop with limited influences from other social service provision. However, the disconnection from other social services may have reduced the quality of the experiences whānau have in those services.
  - *Harnessing tacit knowledge of what works:* Several providers have worked hard to build models of whānau change that link observable behaviours to identifiable progress along a pathway towards whānau wellbeing. These models are a way of translating tacit knowledge into something measurable and reportable. This kind of developmental work holds much promise.
C.1 Purpose of the case study

The purpose of this case study is to identify lessons from Whānau Ora for service transformation. The Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives (2010) set out a range of outcomes for Whānau Ora. This study does not seek to evaluate whether Whānau Ora has achieved those outcomes, but instead identifies and learns from the institutional design features of Whānau Ora, as they relate to achieving better outcomes for whānau.

This case study first outlines the Whānau Ora story and then discusses lessons for institutional design.

C.2 The Whānau Ora story – an overview

Minister Turia established the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives in 2009. Its brief was to construct:

…an evidence-based framework that will lead to:

- strengthened whānau capabilities
- an integrated approach to whānau wellbeing
- collaborative relationships between state agencies in relation to whānau services
- relationships between government and community agencies that are broader than contractual
- improved cost-effectiveness and value for money. (Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives, 2010, p. 6)

The Taskforce’s report recommended a set of outcomes, principles, goals, and “key operational elements”. Crucial to delivering on Whānau Ora would be service providers taking a whānau-centred approach. At that time, the Taskforce saw barriers to such an approach being fully realised:

Many iwi have successfully competed for contracts with government agencies to deliver a range of services that span two, three or four sectors. Consistent with a holistic philosophy the aim has been to provide whānau with a comprehensive approach that addresses multiple needs with minimal overlap, little inconvenience and no confusion. However, a lack of coherence between sectors, and even within sectors, has led to multiple separate contracts, each with different reporting requirements and expectations that have precluded an integrated approach to service delivery. (Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives, 2010, p. 20)

In response to the report, an initiative entitled Whānau Ora was launched (explained further in section C.3). Whānau Ora is the flagship policy for improving the responsiveness of social services to Māori (among other things).

Although Whānau Ora is the flagship policy for social service delivery to Māori, it has had relatively limited coverage. It is important to remember that many iwi and Māori social services exist outside of Whānau Ora – indeed, some have strong stances against being included in Whānau Ora.

Accepting that Whānau Ora and “iwi/Māori” social services are not synonymous, Whānau Ora is still worthy of examination because of its unique features, discussed below.

C.3 What is Whānau Ora?

Common terms and diverse understandings

Whānau ora has different meanings to different people. Two terms have been used largely synonymously by social services to date:

- whānau-centred service delivery – which refers to service providers working with whole whānau to address challenges, rather than individual clients in an atomised way; and
- Whānau Ora – which literally translates as “family wellbeing”.
The Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives noted that:

‘Whānau Ora’ is not mentioned in the Terms of Reference … During the consultation process, hui participants often regarded the overall aim of the Taskforce as synonymous with the broad aims of Whānau Ora, even though interpretations of Whānau Ora varied. (Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives, 2010, p. 28)

It was at this point that “whānau-centric service delivery” and “whānau ora” became conflated by many working in social services. However, treating whānau ora as synonymous with whānau-centred service delivery has sometimes proven to be problematic – whānau ora can be broader than social service delivery, and is not tied in principle to any particular means of achieving whānau wellbeing.

Whānau ora as a term had almost a decade of use in the health context before being picked up for Whānau Ora as an initiative. Because of this, and the term’s use by some as a synonym for whānau-centred service delivery, there has been confusion about what Whānau Ora is as a government initiative.

For example, it is not uncommon to hear kaupapa Māori providers say “we all do whānau ora”, irrespective of whether they are formally part of a provider collective within Whānau Ora or not. The Commission understands this statement to mean:

- kaupapa Māori providers consider themselves committed to achieving wellbeing for whānau; and
- kaupapa Māori providers consider that they work with clients and their whānau, rather than narrowly with clients as individuals.

At the same time, it is also common to hear that government contracting and service structures constrain the ability of providers to deliver whānau-centric services.

This commitment to working with whānau and doing whatever necessary to achieve their wellbeing – while facing institutional constraints – set the scene for the introduction of Whānau Ora as an initiative in 2010. Whānau Ora has grown beyond that, and now encompasses much more than just a change in how social services are delivered.

**How Whānau Ora as an initiative differs from the usual delivery of social services**

**Development, rather than deficit approach**

The goals of Whānau Ora (set out in section C.7) extend beyond the traditional purview of social service providers. The difference between the “fixing people” focus of many social service contracts and the whānau development aims of Whānau Ora is important. “Fixing people” leads to a focus on narrowly defined “problems” and limits the range of legitimate solutions. It can reduce the ability of relevant parties to take measures that will be preventative, by requiring a relatively tight link between the prevention measure and the specified problem. This will tend to skew delivery towards “fixes” that can more readily be linked to immediate problems, and away from addressing underlying causes. As the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives (2010) noted:

…because sectoral approaches are inevitably problem-oriented there is less room to introduce a developmental approach that builds on existing strengths and fosters self-management. (p. 49)

A whānau-development approach, by way of contrast, has much greater freedom to consider action that will improve the wellbeing of whānau generally, making it less likely that they will encounter crises. It is a better fit for empowering whānau, because it takes as its starting point whānau having aspirations rather than having problems. It has greater freedom to address economic issues that underlie many social ills, because it is not constrained by having to “fix” a single “social” problem. Social service providers have often acknowledged that the economic status of whānau has a heavy influence on the demand for their services – one that a traditional provider of social services is ill-placed to address on its own.

**Whānau empowerment**

Whānau self-management is central to Whānau Ora:
While from time to time outside assistance is needed by many whānau, a core feature of Whānau Ora is self-management and self-determination. Long-term dependency on outside agencies is not consistent with Whānau Ora; instead the aim is to enable whānau to assume responsibility for their own affairs. (Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives, 2010, p. 29)

Whānau Ora has sought to empower whānau by having them set the outcomes for their interactions with service providers and, through the whānau planning process, increase their exercise of choice about what services they access or other actions they will take to achieve those outcomes. Whānau Ora as a practice approach is about working with whānau to identify their strengths and aspirations, to assist them to move to a level of wellbeing where they no longer require assistance from social service providers.

Previously, service provision has not always supported this level of self-management:

Sometimes self-management can be undermined by well-meaning agencies that assume leadership roles but without ensuring that whānau leadership is developed to the point that self-management becomes possible. Often whānau leadership is dismissed – sometimes because it is not visible to helping agencies, or presents a threat to them, or because leadership is frequently matriarchal and not necessarily linked to perceived status or obvious power. (Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives, 2010, p. 44)

While there was always an element of choice and client involvement in care planning, there would be very few (if any) previous programmes that had such an explicit focus.

### Institutional differences

Whānau Ora has continued to evolve as an initiative to try and achieve a set of institutional features that best reflect its underlying philosophy. Table C.1 below outlines the reasons why Whānau Ora has diverged from existing social service delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Institutional difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To enable whānau-centric service delivery by existing kaupapa Māori providers</td>
<td>Collectivising providers to try and bring all the services a whānau might need under one umbrella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To resource whānau development more directly</td>
<td>Navigators to work directly with whānau on planning their aspirations and helping them to access services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To broaden the range of Māori civil society organisations that can help whānau develop</td>
<td>Contracting commissioning of Whānau Ora outcomes to three non-government organisations (NGOs) and allow them to contract with any kind of organisation that could work with whānau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To move control and decision making (mana whakahaere) over Whānau Ora further from government and closer to Māori civil society organisations</td>
<td>Contracting out the commissioning role of Te Puni Kōkiri to three NGOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Productivity Commission.

Section C.7 below describes the objectives, funding, and structures of Whānau Ora in more detail.

### C.4 Some relevant history for Whānau Ora

There is a long history of Māori social development initiatives. The more recent antecedents of Whānau Ora, such as Māori Welfare Officers and Maatua Whangai, stemmed from that history of taking a development approach to meeting Māori needs. For example, speaking about the role of Māori Welfare Officers in 1973, the then Minister of Maori Affairs Hon. Matiu Rata stated:

The role of the Māori Welfare Officer is unique within the framework of Government social agencies in that his activities and powers are not limited to specific tasks on the basis of statutory regulations. As you know, your work encompasses any matter which promotes the welfare and progress of the Māori and Island people either as individuals or groups.
...[Y]our work will continue to be, as in the past, to encourage and assist in matters of housing, education, vocational training, trade training, health and physical welfare, law and order — to name but a few facets. Undoubtedly, this work will continue for some years yet, but the prime role of officers is to work with groups on community development in an effort to prevent casework arising. (Hon. Matiu Rata quoted in Te Ao Hou, the Maori Magazine, 1973, p. 14)

In a different area, responses to Māori housing needs originated in the Native Affairs Loans between 1929 and 1945, which themselves were part of land development schemes (OAG, 2011, p. 28). Later, Māori Affairs housing loans were linked to the community development work of Māori Welfare Officers.

The legacy of using a development (rather than deficit) approach may shape how some think about social services for Māori and in particular Whānau Ora. ¹ Whānau Ora has also been influenced by previous attempts to reform delivery of social services to Māori – notably Pūao te ata tū.

Box C.1  Pūao te ata tū

Pūao te ata tū was a report to the then Minister of Social Welfare providing a Māori perspective on the then Department of Social Welfare. The report was prepared by a Ministerial Advisory Committee. Its summary view included the observation that:

Our impressions of the Department of Social Welfare are that although in general it is staffed by highly dedicated, committed people working under great pressure it is seen as being a highly centralised bureaucracy insensitive to the needs of many of its clients. The Department of Social Welfare, in our view, is not capable of meeting its goal without major changes in its policy, planning and service delivery. (The Māori Perspective Advisory Committee, 1988, p. 7)

The report also identified issues with staff training, equal employment opportunities within the Department and institutional racism.

Pūao te ata tū remains particularly influential in shaping contemporary views on how Māori should be involved in the management and delivery of social services, given both the extensive hui process that was gone through to arrive at its report, the mana of those who developed the report and the relatively low implementation of its recommendations.

Throughout the inquiry a number of Māori participants raised with us the view that both the issues with and answers to the delivery of social services were contained in Pūao te ata tū, and that the continuing disadvantage that Māori experience arises from a failure to implement the recommendations of that report. The relevant recommendations favoured a high degree of devolution to regional committees of various sorts, with strong representation on them from local Māori and other groups over-represented among the then Department’s clients. Some of the features of Whānau Ora – such as the initial regional leadership groups – appear analogous with these recommendations.

Increasing the control (or mana whakahaere) of Māori over social services being delivered to them, remains central to Whānau Ora – as does taking a development-focus, rather than deficit-focus.

C.5  The Treaty context for Whānau Ora

The Waitangi Tribunal has not yet determined through its inquiries the application of Article Two to social policy. Nor does the Commission intend to undertake such a task. Inquiry participants did have some expectations of how Article Two is relevant to the delivery of social services.

The principle of active protection of Māori Interests by the Crown arises from Article Two. Failure to provide this active protection, leading to loss of tāonga (including natural resources and culture) is the basis for

¹ Although with a clear focus on Māori, Whānau Ora also has a Pasifika stream to it and is open to all New Zealanders who wish to access whānau/family centric services.
much of the redress through the Treaty settlement process. But active protection is also a forward-looking duty, and may include Māori interests in their own development (both social and economic).

Article Two also guarantees the protection of tino rangatiratanga in the Māori version of the Treaty, commonly translated as self-determination. The ability of Māori to determine their own social and economic development is therefore sometimes couched as a Treaty right under Article Two.

Article Three requires that Māori receive equal rights and privileges. In this case, Article Three has been seen to create duties on the Crown to provide equal access to services, and consideration for further assistance where poor outcomes or potential opportunities warrant it. The debate around Article Three mirrors the debate about equality in New Zealand generally: Does it refer to equality of opportunity, or equality of outcome? There is no clear path through that debate. Typically, the Crown’s duty of active protection of Māori interests under Article Two is used to make the particular case for improving the social and economic development of Māori.

As iwi and other structures within Māoridom have increased opportunities to lead their own economic and social development, boundary issues can arise between the role of iwi and the role of the state. In particular, enabling greater rangatiratanga within social services inherently requires the Crown to step back from “deciding for” and often “doing for” Māori. Yet if the Crown steps back too far, or in the wrong way, then it risks inappropriately leaving iwi to deliver the Crown’s Article Three duties. Reiterating the point made in the inquiry’s Issues Paper, the Commission does not advocate that financial redress through Treaty settlements in any way changes responsibilities for funding or delivering social services (Productivity Commission, 2014, p25).

Navigating these competing duties is inherently fraught. Although those iwi we met with acknowledged that it is challenging, one also noted that the Whānau Ora commissioning agencies are a positive step that has the potential to manage those competing duties well.

C.6 The Pasifika dimension

Some cultural similarities between Pasifika peoples and Māori (such as the importance of working holistically with families) means that a Pasifika stream to Whānau Ora makes sense. A holistic, family-based approach may improve outcomes in the way anticipated by Whānau Ora:

If whole organisations’ and systems are connecting culture and care for Pacific people, we would see better access and service utilisation rates, earlier access of services, a reduction in ‘did not attend’ rates, more satisfaction with services and, ultimately, better outcomes. (Wise Group, sub. 41, p. 26)

Pasifika providers may also find they face similar challenges to those that Whānau Ora is seeking to overcome. These include needing to deliver holistic services that are not taken account of in service contracts (Tangata o le Moana network, sub. 93, pp. 3, 7), the challenges of working across funder boundaries (Tangata o le Moana network, sub. 93, p. 8) and commissioning practices that restrict innovation by Pasifika providers (Wise Group, sub. 41, p. 26).

Some also claim that government has a special relationship with and responsibilities to Pasifika peoples. A study carried out by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) (2000) found that although New Zealand does have a special relationship with pacific peoples, its responsibilities arising from principles of good government rather than specific legal or constitutional requirements (see Box C.2).

Box C.2 What is the nature of the special relationship with Pasifika Peoples?

In its submission, the Wise Group stated:

Indigenous Pasifika populations need to be acknowledged. Pasifika have been part of our New Zealand identity for more than 100 years, with government to government treaties, agreements, obligations and legal commitments. Cook Islands, Tokelau, and Niue are administered under New Zealand, are New Zealand citizens, and utilise New Zealand social services. (sub. 41, pp. 6–7)
Because of the alignment between family-centric service delivery and a culturally appropriate response to social issues faced by Pasifika peoples, there is a clear case for a Whänau Ora type response for Pasifika peoples.

C.7 How Whänau Ora has worked

Whänau Ora has had two distinct phases of operation:

- **Phase one** – Provider collectives were created, and navigators were deployed into them. Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) regional offices administered the Whänau Integration, Innovation, and Engagement (WIIE) fund, which was used to assist whänau who contacted them to develop whänau plans. Whänau planning occurred in both provider collectives and separately through the WIIE fund. Regional Leadership groups were established to provide direction and coordination within their regions.

- **Phase two** – the Whänau Ora specific money (except funding for TPK’s administrative functions) is being moved to three commissioning agencies. These agencies are contracted to TPK and are all NGOs. They are under no obligation to provide funding to the provider collectives. It is unclear what the future of provider collectives will be. Most of their contracts with TPK will end in June 2015.

This section describes the objectives, funding, and structure of Whänau Ora across both phases.

**Objectives**

The performance framework for Whänau Ora is largely set and driven by whänau determining and working towards their own goals, rather than centrally set performance standards. At a national framework level there are six goals for the Whänau Ora initiative, which TPK measures across 11 domains and to which whänau goals can be related. Box C.3 sets these out.
Box C.3 Whānau Ora goals

The Taskforce has identified six major whānau goals:

- whānau self-management
- healthy whānau lifestyles
- full whānau participation in society
- confident whānau participation in te ao Māori
- economic security and successful involvement in wealth creation
- whānau cohesion.

The goals are whānau-centred, have obvious implications for Whānau Ora providers and funders, are capable of quantification, and will form the basis for determining the overall effectiveness of whānau-centred initiatives using the Whānau Ora approach.


Whānau Ora has used a mix of reporting mechanisms to report on goal achievement. These include:

- whānau stories;
- action research with collectives;
- surveys of whānau on their goal progression and experience in Whānau Ora; and
- reporting by provider collectives.

This reporting and measurement effort is on top of reporting by those providers to their respective funders (such as District Health Boards (DHBs), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and MoJ). The MoH does further analysis and reporting on the performance of General Practices in Whānau Ora collectives.

Structure – phase one

Phase one had a structural split between administration of the WIIE fund and provider collectives. TPK held contracts with the provider collectives for the development of Programmes of Action to achieve whānau-centred service delivery. Funding for actual service delivery did not go through TPK – those contracts continued to be held by their original funders (such as MoH, MSD and MoJ). In addition, TPK administered the WIIE fund. Whānau could access the WIIE fund through TPK regional offices, or through the provider collectives. Providers who were not part of a collective might also have provided services from the WIIE fund if TPK brought them in to assist a whānau that had applied through the regional office. Figure C.1 outlines the structure and funding lines of phase one.
Provider collectives

Providers responded to an Express of Interest (EOI) process run by TPK to collectivise and deliver whānau-centric services. Those that were selected then developed a Programme of Action for delivering whānau-centric services and received capability funding to do so.

Provider collectives were to receive an integrated contract for the services they deliver. These contracts failed to live up to the expectations of many.

At the end of phase one, there were 37 Whānau Ora providers and provider collectives with more than 180 health and social service providers in those collectives.

Regional leadership groups

Ten regional leadership groups were established to assess the initial EOI proposals, and then to provide direction and foster communication and coordination within their regions. The groups had between 4 and 7 community members on them, and three officials – one each from TPK, MSD, and MoH. After assessing the EOI proposals, the regional leadership groups made recommendations to the Governance Group, who made the final selections (TPK, 2011, p. 2).

The use of Regional Leadership Groups in this fashion is highly reminiscent of similar groups recommended in Pūao te atā tū.

The governance group

The Whānau Ora Governance Group was comprised of three members of the original Whānau Ora Taskforce, and the Chief executives of TPK, MSD, and MoH. Its role was to advise the Minister for Whānau Ora and to “provide leadership and co-ordination across government agencies and stakeholders” (TPK, n.d., p. 3).
WIIE fund
The WIIE fund paid for up to $5000 of expenses in developing a whānau plan, and up to $20 000 for activities to implement it. No money was paid into the bank accounts of individuals – it was required to go into the accounts of a legal entity (such as a trust or charitable organisation). A developmental evaluation of phase one (Wehipeihana, 2012) noted that there were five “pathways” for whānau to access the WIIE fund.

- Whānau self-refer and largely self-manage their own application.
- Whānau self-refer and seek assistance from TPK to apply to the WIIE fund.
- Whānau make an enquiry to TPK, who refers them to an organisation that can support the whānau to apply. This happened where the whānau required more intensive support to apply than TPK could provide. These organisations were typically “category two organisations” – such as social service providers, marae, family trusts – that were not part of a provider collective.
- Whānau were referred to “category two” providers by TPK for support through the planning process or because they need a legal entity to act as the fund holder.
- A provider collective approaches whānau that it believes would benefit from the whānau planning process. (pp. 23–24)

Some provider collectives were allocated funding from the WIIE fund to carry out a certain number of plans with whānau (it differed by collective). These were reported to TPK Head Office, rather than through the regional offices distribution processes.

Navigators
Whānau Ora navigators were introduced part way into the implementation of phase one. Navigators work with whānau to help them identify their goals, plan how they will achieve them, and assist them to access services. Former Minister Turia described their role as:

[To increase the capacity of whānau and families to do more for themselves, to become self-reliant, and to make their own decisions for their future. (Minister for Whānau Ora, 2014a)]

Navigators are discussed more in section C.10.

Where Whānau Ora stood at the end of phase one
By the end of phase one 8 916 whānau were receiving whānau-centred services, 4 138 whānau were working with navigators, and numerous stories of whānau achieving greater wellbeing had been collected (Minister for Whānau Ora, 2014b, p. 17).

In terms of operational matters, achieving integrated contracting had proven fraught. The hoped for reduction in compliance costs had not eventuated, and individual providers within collectives were still accountable to their funding departments for delivery of individual services and contracts.

A number of provider collectives were reliant on navigators and some coordination and analysis positions funded through the programmes of action to enable a change in systems and processes. This reliance calls into question the sustainability of some of the changes, as most of the Programme of Action contracts end by 30 June 2014/2015.

Achieving the vision of Whānau Ora for phase one would have required significant change in practices both by providers (through collectivisation) and for government agencies (in terms of their contracting approach). In practice, transformation by government agencies appears to have lagged.

Partly due to the difficulties of contracting, and also seemingly due to a concern that the bulk of the money tagged for Whānau Ora was going to providers rather than more directly to whānau, phase two of Whānau Ora was introduced.
Structure – phase two

The move to phase two of Whānau Ora has involved a shift in focus for Whānau Ora, and a change in some of the structures. Table C.2 below sets out the main features of the transition to phase two of Whānau Ora.

Table C.2 Change of focus between phase one and phase two of Whānau Ora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original focus</th>
<th>New focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build service provider capability</td>
<td>Build whānau and family capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Puni Kōkiri administering entity - invest in Service providers directly on behalf of the Minister</td>
<td>Establishment of 3 NGO Commissioning Agencies with a North Island, South Island and Pacific focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGO Commissioning Agencies contracted to Te Puni Kōkiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing in 160 plus primary health and Social service providers across 34 provider collectives</td>
<td>Broadened focus to bring other local level organisations into the investment frame</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Features added and features disestablished in phase two

In terms of governance, the Whānau Ora Governance Group has been disestablished and replaced by the Whānau Ora Partnership Group. The role of the partnership group is somewhat different to the role of the former governance group:

The Whānau Ora Partnership Group is a forum of ministerial and iwi representatives. The group determines the Whānau Ora outcomes that Commissioning Agencies need to achieve and identifies opportunities that the Crown and iwi can contribute to, that support the aims and aspirations of whānau, hapū and iwi, in relation to Whānau Ora. (Minister of Finance, Minister for Whānau Ora, 2014)

The Regional Leadership Groups have also been disestablished.

In terms of operational matters, the commissioning role of TPK is being contracted out to three commissioning agencies – each of them NGOs. The WIIE fund has been disestablished and all funding not under contract is being migrated to funding the commissioning agencies. With the disestablishment of the WIIE fund the role of TPK regional offices has been pulled back to providing information on Whānau Ora and directing whānau to available services.

Service delivery funding continues to be through contracts with line ministries such as MSD and MoH. Commissioning funds are to purchase “Whānau Ora outcomes”. This means that most services delivered by Whānau Ora collectives continue to be purchased by line agencies – not the Whānau Ora commissioning agencies. Commissioning agencies have no accountability for the general performance of provider collectives (beyond where they have contracted with them for a specific service); nor do they have any obligations to purchase services from them.

Figure C.2 outlines the new structure of Whānau Ora in phase two.
Provider collectives appear to have no formal place in phase two (accepting that they can tender for contracts with the commissioning agencies along with other providers). Most provider collectives will have no contractual duties to TPK after June 2015, with only a handful of contracts continuing to June 2016.

Provider collectives are generally expected to provide data through a Whānau Ora IT system that MoH is developing. MoH intends to fund the IT system for five years after its roll-out – implying an expectation that provider collectives will be active over that period. This reporting system would generate reports for the provider collectives that use it and for MoH (who can then share relevant information with MSD or TPK). MoH had not intended to provide the reporting data to the three commissioning agencies, although they could request it.

Drawing it together – where does Whānau Ora sit now?

Whānau Ora now has bits of the architecture of both phase one and phase two active, but it is not clear whether or how they will link together. It is unclear whether commissioning agencies replace TPK within Whānau Ora, or whether they instead exist to bring in capability that strengthens the developmental focus of Whānau Ora. In practice, there seem to be conflicting expectations and views on which roles, or which combination of roles, these commissioning agencies will play.

Role of commissioning agencies

At its simplest, TPK has delegated its commissioning role to the three NGOs. However, TPK retains the existing contracts with provider collectives, and the commissioning agencies have no contractual relationship to the existing provider collectives (unless they choose to make a new contract with them). They do not have oversight of the system in the way that TPK has had. Likewise, the seemingly tight accountability and negotiated status of the investment plans (discussed further in section C.13) suggests that the commissioning agencies are still some way from replacing TPK’s previous commissioning role.

Alternatively, the commissioning agencies could be seen as bringing a range of expertise and capability to Whānau Ora that has not previously been present. Both Te Pou Matakana and Pasifika Futures place a
strong emphasis on building evidence and the use of data. Te Pūtahitanga and Pasifika Futures are working on issues that have traditionally not played a strong part in the delivery of social services (such as whānau enterprise and reducing high levels of debt to third tier lenders – colloquially known as “loan sharks”). Under such an approach, the three commissioning agencies build whānau wellbeing from a different angle than the “traditional” delivery of social services (see Figure C.3).

**Figure C.3** Different kinds of capability brought to Whānau Ora

In practice, the three commissioning agencies have all taken different approaches to their roles (Table C.3 below).
Table C.3  Different approaches of the three commissioning agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Te Pou Matakana</th>
<th>Pasifika Futures</th>
<th>Te Pūtahitanga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Collective Impact” approach, in which TPM provides funding and backbone support to both the social service providers and provider collectives in the North Island</td>
<td>Core commissioning focuses on purchasing navigational services. Has a strong focus on evidencing changes in the outcomes framework, which was derived from consultation with 600 pasifika families. Includes working in non-traditional areas such as economic wellbeing through debt reduction</td>
<td>Focuses on social enterprise and whānau development. Te Pūtahitanga has refocused its investment approach to also include a greater emphasis on service provision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ongoing role for provider collectives is unclear

Understanding the minister’s intentions in moving from phase one to phase two can illumine why the change was made, what it was intended to do, and what that might mean for provider collectives:

I guess my determination… is to see that those agencies do not get focused on organisations [but] that they do get focused on making the changes for families, and that the resources should get as close to family as possible if we want to make the difference.

I fixed a problem just before I finished. That was to encourage people to understand that Whānau Ora does not need to be delivered by a service provider - that there are other organisations, family collectives, family trusts and marae who already deal with people in family settings who could be doing really important jobs. (Hon Tariana Turia, quoted in Bootham, 2014)

On the one hand, an emphasis on diversifying those working with whānau is consistent with developing Māori communities and moving to independence from the existing service provision infrastructure. On the other hand, a significant investment has been made in achieving the formation of provider collectives. Admittedly, this whānau-centric service delivery capability is now available for government commissioning agents outside of Whānau Ora to contract with. But overall, how this capability will be stewarded is unclear (noting that explicitly decommissioning it is an option).

Stewardship of the Whānau Ora system

As noted above, the funding for navigators previously supplied to provider collectives mostly ends in June 2015. Funding in budget 2014 for “navigation services” has been allocated to the commissioning agencies to distribute from 2015/2016. The Commission is aware that at least one provider collective will de-collectivise on 30 June 2015, because without the navigation and coordination resources it received it cannot sustain the integration it has achieved.

More broadly, selection of some provider collectives and not others for funding has the effect of dis-investing in the non-funded collectives. However, that reflects more the effects of rationing funding for specific proposals, rather than a view of the effectiveness or value of those collectives outside their specific funding proposals.

This highlights a broader issue for commissioning social services – funding decisions for individual services or components of services can have disproportionate effects on the viability of service delivery infrastructure. This is particularly problematic when government agencies (and indeed, providers) have spent time and money building that infrastructure. As social investment becomes a much stronger approach in making decisions on social services spending (from the Treasury budget process down), the question of how these effects are or are not valued will become increasingly important.

To the extent that provider collectives were an experiment, clear conclusions need to be drawn and communicated about provider collectives as an institutional choice. Good commissioning practice also involves good de-commissioning. The absence of a clear statement on the future of provider collectives is stark. Because the funding, and therefore decisions, were moved from TPK, it is no longer in a position to
explicitly determine the future of the provider collectives. At the same time, it is not the role of commissioning agencies to determine the effectiveness or otherwise of the provider collective model.

Decentralising TPK’s commissioning function and re-focusing it on managing the few remaining contracts with provider collectives has opened up a gap in the leadership of Whānau Ora. Responsibility for different parts of stewarding the Whānau Ora system appears to have been allocated between TPK and the Partnership group, but these responsibilities do not amount to the active and comprehensive stewardship discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 14 of the inquiry report.

Tino rangatiratanga and the relationship of Whānau Ora to the rest of social service provision

Māori inquiry participants expressed a strong belief that Whānau Ora should be owned by Māori. This ownership is important, because part of the whānau ora concept is empowerment over decision making for Māori whānau. The importance of ownership is also grounded in a sense of history from previous initiatives:

I was listening to the kōrero this morning about Pūao-te-ata-tū from Bill and Kingi and Matua Whangai – programmes the Government commandeered and never saw through in a real sense.

It was a framework for whānau, hapū and iwi to restore their rights to determine their future. I suppose in a way I am sad that it took 26 years to be able to move forward.

Whānau Ora in essence, is about taking back control and responsibility. (Minister for Whānau Ora, 2014c)

Taken to the extreme though, this can lead to Whānau Ora becoming isolated from closely related social service delivery, and for other important connections to be lost sight of. For example, a variety of inquiry participants, including service providers and regional offices of government agencies admitted to little or no understanding of Whānau Ora, and less contact with it. Submitters also raised this point:

Barriers to success include … lack of understanding amongst key government partners of Whānau Ora delivery; gate keeping and suspicion of new ways of doing things, and lack of investment. (Palmerston North Community Services Council, sub. 125, p. 8)

Whānau Ora has benefited from having time to develop, with limited influences from other social service provision. However, building greater connections with other social services may improve the quality of the experiences whānau have in those services.

C.8 Institutional design lessons from Whānau Ora

This inquiry uses a number of institutional architectures (Chapter 5) and service models (Chapter 6) to examine and understand how social services are delivered. The models most relevant to Whānau Ora are:

- client choice;
- shared goals; and
- devolved commissioning.

This part also contains a section on performance management.

C.9 Client choice – Whānau plans

Empowering whānau to be more self-determining has been widely identified as critical for making progress on the disparity between Māori and other populations. For example, Sir Mason Durie’s Te Pae Mahutonga model of public health promotion notes that there are two important prerequisites for effectiveness – Nga Manukura (leadership) and Te Mana Whakahaere (autonomy, or “the power to manage”).

No matter how dedicated and expertly delivered, health promotional programmes will make little headway if they operate in a legislative and policy environment which is the antithesis of health, or if programmes are imposed with little sense of community ownership or control. Good health cannot be prescribed. Communities – whether they be based on hapū, marae, iwi, whānau or place of residence – must ultimately be able to demonstrate a level of autonomy and self-determination in promoting their own health. (Durie, 1999, p. 5)
Inquiry participants also made this point:

It is no wonder then that disparity of Māori wellbeing persists as whānau continue to be sidelined observers of decisions made about their lives. Ownership of goals and aspirations is fundamental to whānau reclaiming their obligations and responsibilities and therefore must be recognised in the future framework for more effective social services. (Te Roopu Waiora, sub. 97, p. 4)

In Whānau Ora, the whānau initially exercises choice by approaching the relevant commissioning agency, or by getting involved with a Whānau Ora provider collective (previously whānau could also make an application to the WIIE fund). From there, the whānau planning process is supposed to enable a whānau to set their aspirations and determine what support they want, when and where, and from whom. Whānau choice, of both the goals they wish to pursue and the services or means they will use to pursue them, is the practical implementation of whānau autonomy and self-determination.

Client choice has been touted internationally as a better way of making decisions about allocating resources. If clients choose what they need, then in theory there will be no wasted effort (Chapter 11 of the inquiry report explores this further). Submitters identified Whānau plans as a useful source of information about what services should be available:

During its application, over 40,000 Māori participated in developing their own Whānau Ora plans - providing for the first time ever, a valuable source of information to aid social services planning nationally. The realisation quickly became apparent to those who analysed the data, that the menu and approach of services had been established before whānau priorities had been identified. A mismatch was therefore inevitable. (Te Roopu Waiora, sub. 97, pp. 3–4)

One of the challenges of whānau planning is that it is hard to know how much influence the provider and their priorities have on plans, objectives, and the actions prioritised for whānau. There are stories both of providers working very carefully to ensure maximum whānau autonomy and empowerment, and also stories of some negative experiences:

Worse still were the attempts by some agencies and providers to influence the goals of whanau and align these with their own contracted services and performance indicators. (Te Roopu Waiora, sub. 97, pp. 3–4)

Whānau Ora is not a strict “client choice” model. Where client choice has been used explicitly to drive improvements in resource allocation (such as client-directed budgets for disability support services), they have several other features not present in Whānau Ora – notably that funding follows the clients, and providers are expected to compete for clients. Given these mechanisms largely were not selected for Whānau Ora, the role of the navigator has been crucial in driving changes in practice, based on whānau choice.

C.10 Client choice – Navigators

In client-choice based systems, navigators act as brokers for clients who may need help determining the services most appropriate for them (see Appendix D). Navigators in Whānau Ora have a further role, which includes leading change in the delivery of services, particularly in service integration. This may reflect the need for a mechanism other than competition to help achieve changes to service delivery that respond to whānau need.

Evidence presented to us in engagement meetings and action research reports suggested that it was only when navigators were deployed in the provider collectives that service integration began to occur. For example:

With the introduction of the navigators, [x] has embraced a clear change in the direction of services and approach. The employment and positioning of the navigators in [x] has been the main influence of change in the organisation. The navigators have led this change through working closely with staff and providing leadership, guidance and facilitation of Whānau Ora. (Sauni & Tuagalu, 2014, p. 7)

Not all navigators are embedded within provider collectives. However, the choice to locate navigators in provider collectives seems to have been particularly critical for enabling greater integration. Under many choice models, navigators would be kept independent of providers, because they are the clients’ agent and...
being too close to providers might skew their decisions. Those models tend to use competition for clients to drive transformation in service delivery.

Navigators have had a clear accountability to and for whānau. They have needed to sort out referral processes and to work out how a range of practitioners would work together to assist whānau to achieve their aspirations. The changes they are trying to generate are grounded in the needs of actual whānau they are working with – being able to argue from what is best for the client has been highly influential in changing many service systems generally.

**C.11 Shared-goals – provider collectives**

By collectivising, providers were supposed to bring all the services that whānau are likely to need under one umbrella (or as many as possible). This was a critical step towards enabling providers to work holistically with whānau, rather than deliver individual services to individual whānau. Integrated contracts were supposed to provide flexibility to collectives in how they would deliver services. At an extreme, this would almost be pooled funding for agreement to deliver specified objectives.

We were told that, in practice, the integrated contracts have not added much flexibility to the delivery of Whānau Ora. In essence, the old contract requirements are simply appended as schedules to the contract. This hindered, or at least did not help, flexibility and change in service delivery. Most organisations within provider collectives are from the health sector. Housing and education are two sectors that are relatively under-represented in provider collectives. This will have reduced the effectiveness of collectivisation as a means of increasing whānau-centricity.

Collectivisation alone is insufficient to achieve significant change and integration. To achieve the benefits of integration, the provider collectives would need to have the ability to make some changes to elements of service design.

In practice, line agencies have held relatively tightly to their commissioning decisions. There have been some good reasons for this. For instance, where an organisation within a provider collective has been contracted to provide a regional service that other providers refer to, changes to it could have implications beyond Whānau Ora. Of course, those changes could also be positive.

The success of provider collectives has been limited by constraining their control over the commissioning of services. That is not to say that shared goals have not been more effective in other contexts. The relationship between collectives and their funders is essential. Models like the Canterbury Care Network include the funder in the collective. This is another way for the collective to influence the commissioning decisions they might need to make to achieve improved effectiveness.

**C.12 Devolved commissioning – NGO commissioning agencies**

This inquiry has described devolution as occurring through the transfer of functions, authority for decision-making, finance and management to quasi-autonomous units with clear and legally recognized boundaries (see Chapter 5). Devolution can occur with different degrees of structural separation, with either strong or weak accountability links to the devolving party. The stronger the accountability arrangement, typically the more pressure the devolving party may be placed under to exert influence on the devolved commissioning agency. This is discussed further in section C.13.

Structurally, the Whānau Ora commissioning agencies are best thought of as “contracted-out commissioning”. This is perhaps the closest structural relationship that can be used when devolving functions. Organisations were created to tender for the commissioning functions previously held by TPK. The division of those functions is not an attempt to devolve functions to existing communities, but instead reflects their ability to work with a particular population group.

Separate to the structural relationship is how its implementation is approached. TPK demonstrated a strong “ethic” of devolution in their thinking and approach to working with the commissioning agencies.
An agency might choose to contract out commissioning functions where the “organisation-specific capital” of an NGO or other organisation means they are better placed to carry out commissioning. This was a leading justification for choosing contracted-out commissioning as the best option for Whānau Ora:

In the Whānau Ora context a commissioning approach purchases the expertise, networks and knowledge of NGOs, which act as brokers to match the needs and aspirations of families and whānau with initiatives that will assist them to increase their capability. (Minister for Whānau Ora, 2013, p. 6)

Funding Whānau Ora through NGO commissioning agencies is not without controversy. Some providers worry that the commissioning agencies are simply an added cost in the system. There was concern that the commissioning agencies could turn into just another layer of bureaucracy in the funding process, reducing the overall pool of funding available for working with whānau:

Some commissioning and contracting processes appear to be creating hierarchies within the NGO sector, eg. Whānau Ora and ACC, with suppliers as an additional layer to prior systems. This creates more levels of accountability and expense for NGOs who require funding. (Palmerston North Community Services Council, sub. 125, p. 8)

Offers of added-value support – such as support with back-office functions – were not universally looked on kindly. Larger, more capable providers in particular could not see how this would justify the cost of commissioning agencies.

Conversely, the Commission was impressed by the sophistication that the commissioning agencies were bringing to needs identification, purchasing strategies and performance measurement. The commissioning agencies had significant reach into their communities, and the ability to respond to emerging needs relatively quickly. The organisational cultures of the commissioning agencies were significantly different to the culture within government purchasers, particularly with regards to their attitudes on:

- what can be done;
- how soon it can be done;
- how it can be done; and
- how measurable the outcomes would be.

The Commission considers that this is likely to make the commissioning agencies more responsive than the average government purchaser. Whether these advantages outweigh the costs of the agencies will be seen over time, but there is little doubt that the communities they work with will keep their cost–benefit ratio under close scrutiny.

### C.13 Performance management

#### Performance management of provider collectives and plans made under the WIIE fund

Section C.7 set out the significant range of reporting undertaken in Whānau Ora. Despite this, questions are still sometimes asked about what Whānau Ora is really achieving.

The remaining questions about what Whānau Ora is achieving arise from the challenge in social services of turning “tacit knowledge” into “performance data” that can survive being reported through organisational hierarchies. Through their interactions with whānau, navigators and other practitioners will gain a sense of how real, sustainable or significant a whānau’s progress is. Reducing this to countable things, and then reporting it through several layers, can strip out these valuable impressions.

The Commission observed several providers working hard to build models of change that link observable behaviours to identifiable progress along a pathway towards whānau wellbeing. These models are a way of translating tacit knowledge into something measurable and reportable. As challenging as it is to do this robustly, this kind of developmental work holds much promise and could be one of the key lessons for the broader social sector arising from Whānau Ora.
Performance management of commissioning agencies

The payment-by-results components of the contracts with the commissioning agencies are a step towards contracts for outcomes. The advantage of contracting for outcomes is that it provides freedom to the contractors to use whatever methods they determine are appropriate – so long as they achieve the outcome. They can be contrasted with outputs-based contracts, where the contract specifies what can be delivered in terms of the exact services the contractor must provide (eg, bed nights).

The “incentive payment” is a form of bonus for delivery in some programme areas. That incentive payment could be for outcomes, but in the establishment years it is anticipated that the payment may be made on the basis of outputs, or establishing baseline data. TPK’s investment plan guidance notes an intention to move the incentive payment to an outcomes basis across the term of the three-year contract.

The contract terms for the commissioning agencies are for three years, but the commissioning agencies must submit annual investment plans, detailing the programmes that the commissioning agencies will commission, the attendant activities within those programmes, the “results” sought by those activities, and the KPIs for those activities. TPK has rolled down its output reporting accountabilities about the number of whänau engaged at any one time to the commissioning agencies. Such tight specification may not sit well with the commissioning approaches of some of the commissioning agencies, especially where they are strongly reliant on sourcing initiatives from the community.

Contracting out commissioning has not necessarily led to the freedom and flexibility of contracting for outcomes. Greater freedom is possible through negotiating the incentive payments. As discussed above, TPK has demonstrated an “ethic of devolution” in its approach to contracting with and administering the commissioning agencies. This may not be best supported by the contracting-out model, as it does not necessarily put sufficient distance between the commissioning agencies and government to loosen the incentives that lead to a high degree of upfront specification.

C.14 Conclusion

The Commission has observed a great deal of potential in the Whänau Ora approach – this inquiry has not changed our 2012 position that Whänau Ora is a good vehicle for whänau to use to pursue their development aspirations (see Productivity Commission, 2012, pp. 247–248). Although the Whänau Ora approach was not the unanimously preferred method of social development among all inquiry participants, it is still an option that many have chosen.

Because Whänau Ora is a community development approach, it is in its very nature that some of the capability needed for success is currently under-developed. Whänau Ora is meant to build that capability. More important is whether the system responds well to any particular failures, and what opportunities it creates that would not otherwise be present. The work that the commissioning agencies are undertaking illustrates the range of opportunities that Whänau Ora is creating.

Whänau Ora has at its heart the empowerment of whänau, which in practice requires devolution of funding and decision-making rights and responsibilities. This is consistent with thinking on indigenous development around the world generally. Chapter 14 recommends greater devolution of te mana whakahaere in social services to Māori – this could be pursued through Whänau Ora.

The Taskforce on Whänau-Centred Initiatives noted that success for Whänau Ora would require strong commitment across government agencies (2010, p. 57). Currently, the level of commitment has appeared to be lukewarm in some quarters (Flavell, 2014).

Pursuing greater whänau empowerment means that it is whänau who need to decide what mechanism they wish to use (Whänau Ora, or another). This is part of rangatiratanga. It would therefore be too simplistic to say that Whänau Ora is the only solution for whänau and community empowerment. However, many whänau and communities have chosen Whänau Ora, and the evidence suggests there is still quite some way to go to devolve sufficient funding and decision making to achieve the aspirations of those whänau and communities. Chapter 13 sets out some of the design issues that, if handled well, could improve the feasibility of increased devolution.
References


