

Submission on Improving outcomes for Tamariki Māori - Section 7AA and Oranga Tamariki Outcomes Framework

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of whānau and focuses on the aspirations and development of whānau. As an organisation, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is committed to the Whānau Ora approach where whānau are self-determining and driven by a holistic approach to wellbeing.

The following is a summary of the recommendations that are contained within the body of this submission on **Improving Outcomes for Tamariki Māori – Section 7AA** and the **Oranga Tamariki Outcomes Framework**.

Recommendation 1: *That hapū, iwi and Māori organisations such as Whānau Ora Commissioning agencies be consulted in the development of the policies and practices that impact on the well-being of children and young persons who come to the attention of the department with the objective of reducing disparities.*

Recommendation 2: *That a ‘how to layer’ that demonstrates an understanding of cultural identity, and champions cultural competency, be developed to assist in the development, operation and implementation of the policies and practices of the department that impact on the well-being of tamariki Māori and young persons, and that all who engage with tamariki Māori including senior leadership of other agencies (including Oranga Tamariki senior leadership) and staff at all levels demonstrate an understanding of, and champion, cultural competency and that the role that Kairaranga play have a greater acknowledgment in the application of cultural competency.*

Recommendation 3: *That Section 7AA include a requirement for reporting on Māori specific measurements to ensure that any plans or targets focus on the right areas and target children in greatest need.*

Recommendation 4: *That the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes accurately reflects children and young people in the context of their families and communities and ensures mutually reinforcing action takes place at all levels to support their wellbeing.*

Recommendation 5: *That whānau receive the support that they need to support the wellbeing of their tamariki, and that the application of mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga are recognised as being interrelated and therefore should be considered together, and that the roles and obligations of whānau, hapū and iwi are intertwined with whakapapa and whanaungatanga and therefore mana tamaiti.*

Recommendation 6: *That the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes be linked to other policies and legislation such as the:*

- * Child Poverty Reduction Act (passed on 18 December 2018),
- * Living Standards Framework,
- * He Oati mō ngā Taitamariki ō tō tātou Whenua A Covenant for Our Nation's Children
- * Child Wellbeing Strategy – (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC))
- * Social Investment Agency (SIA) wellbeing work programme
- * Lifetime Child Wellbeing Model (Oranga Tamariki)
- * The Social Report (Ministry for Social Development),
- * Sustainable Development Goals Reporting - Ministry for Foreign Affairs,
- * United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and
- * United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Recommendation 7: *That consideration and inclusion of enabling settings to be actioned*

to support, deliver and give effect to Section 7AA.

Recommendation 8: That the tracking of the interim progress to assess whether policies are on track to achieve the targets be established.

Recommendation 9: That the Government should consult widely with independent bodies (including whānau, hapū, iwi) on policy evaluation, design and implementation, as well as expenditure undertaken to reduce disparities and that any reporting be transparent and detail the Government's long-term budgetary plans, emphasising a review of spending according to the needs of children revealed after interim reporting.

Recommendation 10: That a greater Māori perspective be contained in the Oranga Tamariki framework and that this framework be connected, integrated and have a greater alignment with **Section 7AA** of the **Children, Young Persons and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017** and the recommendations in this Submission.

INTRODUCTION

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu welcomes the opportunity to comment on **Improving Outcomes for Tamariki Māori – Section 7AA**.

Whānau Ora is based on the belief that a healthy whānau is not reliant on indicators of deprivation but is instead driven by a belief in their own inherent wealth. Whānau wellbeing is intimately tied to the concepts of caring – the application of manaakitanga, wairuatanga, and ukaipotanga.

Whānau Ora recognises the collective strength and capability of whānau to achieve better outcomes in areas such as health, education, housing, justice, environment, employment and income levels. Our relationships encourage inter-dependence; we know that our strength comes through all of us taking up our roles and responsibilities to one another.

Whānau Ora Navigators support whānau to be self-determining and navigate whānau to champion their aspirations. Our Whānau Ora Navigators work with whānau to:

- support them through crisis and link them to the appropriate services
- Collaborate, broker services and advocate ensuring their needs are addressed in a holistic way.
- Help develop a step-by step plan to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- Identify and strengthen support networks.
- Reduce any risk of harm to whānau.
- Uplift mana and create opportunities for cultural connectedness.

The Whānau Ora approach is unique because it:

- recognises a collective entity,
- endorses a group capacity for self-determination,
- has an inter-generational dynamic,
- is built on a Māori cultural foundation,
- asserts a positive role for whānau within society and,
- can be applied across a wide range of social and economic sectors.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the South Island. We respond to whānau innovation, to foster and grow inspirational ideas that are whānau-centred, intergenerational, locally driven, and provide direct impact for whānau to enable independent transformational change.

We represent a legal partnership of Ngā Iwi o Te Waipounamu, the nine iwi of the South Island: Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā To, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Rarua, Ngāti Tama, Rangitane o Wairau, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, and Te Atiawa. This unique initiative is the first time, ever, that the iwi has come together for a common cause to trailblaze a new model that reflects the aspirations of ngā iwi as they relate to whānau.

As our name suggests, we reflect the convergence of the rivers of Te Waipounamu, bringing sustenance to the people and reflecting the partnership's founding principle of whanaungatanga.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The overrepresentation of tamariki Māori in State care continues to increase in Aotearoa with current child protection methods appearing to marginalise the most disadvantaged¹. For many whānau, the fear and distrust of the welfare system has significant impacts on parenting, safety for children and opportunities to receive help and thus containing the ingredients to create another generation of trauma.

The impact of child poverty has short and long-term health, social, economic and cultural outcomes for children and as such, their whānau. The urgency of survival issues for whānau is ongoing with rising concerns of food and fuel poverty; self-harm and suicide ideation; homelessness; and harm caused by alcohol and drug abuse. These are issues which urgently require a meaningful cross-sectoral approach. We include portfolios such as Child Poverty Reduction, Regional Economic Development, and Crown/Māori Relations among those which should be working towards shared outcomes with Whānau Ora in Te Waipounamu. Cross-sector social investment would also support the alleviation of geographic isolation, a persistent issue for whānau in Te Waipounamu.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu supports the purpose of **Section 7AA** of the **Children, Young Persons and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017**, which sets out the duties of the Chief Executive in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi:

- that in recognition of, and providing a practical commitment to, the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, this is an opportunity to embed the rights and interests that all tamariki and their whānau are entitled to;
- the importance of taking a whānau-centred approach in understanding tamariki in the context of their homes, whānau, schools, communities and the country and considering their rights, best interests and wellbeing within these contexts;
- that a focus on reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes for Māori tamariki and young persons who come to the attention of the department supports wellbeing and is a significant step forward;
- that reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes requires system-wide outcomes linked to other policies and legislation such as the:
 - *Child Poverty Reduction Act (passed on 18 December 2018)*,
 - *Living Standards Framework*,

¹ Two thirds of the current population of children in state care (6300 children) are Māori

- *Child Wellbeing Strategy – (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)),*
 - *He Oati mō ngā Taitamariki ō tō tātou Whenua A Covenant for Our Nation's Children*
 - *Social Investment Agency (SIA) wellbeing work programme*
 - *Lifetime Child Wellbeing Model (Oranga Tamariki)*
 - *The Social Report (Ministry for Social Development),*
 - *Sustainable Development Goals Reporting - Ministry for Foreign Affairs,*
 - *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and*
 - *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*
- that the application of mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga are interrelated and should be considered together, not separately and that the roles and obligations of whānau, hapū and iwi are intertwined with whakapapa and whanaungatanga and therefore mana tamaiti;
 - that strategic partnerships should reflect a Treaty relationship, be action-oriented and focused on relationships and strategy that are localised and relevant to the needs of tamariki, whānau, hapū and iwi of an area;
 - that the need to build cultural capability and Maori leadership should be undertaken across the public sector.
 - that the importance of senior leadership of agencies including Oranga Tamariki senior leadership to demonstrate understanding of, and champion, cultural competency;
 - that all who engage with tamariki Māori and their whānau demonstrate understanding of, and champion, cultural competency;
 - that there is a need to support, strengthen and assist whānau to care for their tamariki to prevent the need for their removal from their whānau home into State care or a Youth Justice response;
 - that where tamariki Māori cannot stay at home, the preference is for placements for tamariki Māori (including siblings) with members of their whānau, hapū and iwi and ensuring that adequate support and assistance is provided to the whānau to meet the needs of tamariki Māori;
 - that where a child is in the care of Oranga Tamariki, every care should be taken to establish, maintain or strengthen tamariki Māori and their sense of belonging through cultural identity and connections to whānau, hapū and iwi giving a practical application to the notions of mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga;
 - that tamariki Māori and their whānau should be supported and strengthened to prepare for their return home or transition into the community.

The emphasis on the centrality of the child within the context of whānau is not a new phenomenon. In 1988, ***Puao-te-ata-tu - the Report on the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare*** noted that “*legislation which*

recognises social, cultural and economic values of all cultural groups and especially Maori people” be endorsed (pg. 9). The same framework supported the development of “strategies and initiatives which harness the potential of all of its people, and especially Maori people, to advance.” The importance of the place of the child in Māori society and its relationship with whānau, hapū, iwi structures was also emphasised (pg. 7).

The preliminary report of **Whakapono: End Child Poverty in Māori Whānau (2017)** further reinforced the link between the wellbeing of tamariki Māori and the wellbeing of their whānau. Lasting solutions to the effects of poverty among all tamariki is needed if Aotearoa is to address the intergenerational trauma that successive generations have endured because of poverty.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also supports the development of an Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (Section 8) to improve the wellbeing of specific groups of at-risk children but also acknowledges that the place of the child in Māori society and its relationship with whānau, hapū, iwi structures (pg. 7) must be a consideration of the plan.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu supports the inclusion of Section 7AA, the duties of the Chief Executive in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi particularly as Māori children are over-represented in State care.

Insights from the experiences of tamariki Māori and their whānau and enabling best practice through partnering outcomes are invaluable and can be useful when developing measurable outcomes to reduce disparities for tamariki Māori in state care.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu recognises the role and benefit that whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations such as Whānau Ora Commissioning agencies can have in the development of the policies and practices that reduce disparities and impact on the well-being of children and young persons who come to the attention of the department.

Recommendation 1: That whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations such as Whānau Ora Commissioning agencies be consulted in the development of the policies and practices with the objective of reducing disparities that impact on the well-being of Māori children and young persons who come to the attention of the department.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also supports the duties of the Chief Executive to ensure that –

- a) the policies and practices of the department that impact on the wellbeing of children and young persons have the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes for Māori children and young persons who come to the attention of the department; and

- b) the policies and practices of the department to have regard to mana tamaiti (tamariki) and the whakapapa of Māori children and young persons and the whanaungatanga responsibilities of their whānau, hapū and iwi.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu supports the policies and practices of the department to have the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes for Māori children and young persons who come to the attention of the department. These policies and practices also include those that occur with whānau when participating in processes such as whānau hui or the family group conference. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu support the appropriate application of mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga which are interrelated and should be **considered together, not separately** and that the roles and obligations of whānau, hapū and iwi are intertwined with whakapapa and whanaungatanga and therefore mana tamaiti.

The Ministry of Social Development has identified the connection between cultural identity and wellbeing as an “important contributor to people’s wellbeing” (Ministry for Social Development, 2016, p.175). The Ministry notes that an established cultural identity has also been linked with positive outcomes in areas such as health and education and provides access to social networks which assist in breaking down barriers and building trust.

Dalziel, Saunders, Te Hemi, Savage and Hynds (2018) identify the importance of cultural identity for wellbeing in *Cultural Identity and Wellbeing* (2018). The research aims to make progress on defining and measuring cultural identity and its impact on enhanced wellbeing. The research will consider five elements that Dalziel et al. consider important aspects of cultural identity. These elements include:

1. **Cultural intergenerational connections** – connections to cultural value, ancestors and their descendants. For Māori, this would be **whakapapa**.
2. **Cultural efficacy** – The extent to which a person or whānau is knowledgeable and confident in their inherited values. In a Māori cultural setting, this is **mana**.
3. **Cultural sense of place** – This is the extent to which a person or whānau is comfortable with their place in the cosmos. In a Māori cultural setting, this setting is called **tūrangawaewae** or place to stand.
4. **Cultural relational agency** – This is the extent a person or whānau exercise their agency in relation to others to participate in the ongoing transformation of cultural values and practices. Māori would call this **rangatiratanga**.
5. **Cultural expression** – the extent a person or whānau is capable of expressing cultural values and practices in their lived experience. For Māori, this would be **tikanga**.

This list is not meant to be definitive but rather represents a tentative first step in a collaborative research to understand the value of cultural identity to the wellbeing of persons, whānau, communities and the country.

What the research does identify is the importance of cultural identity (as noted by the five elements). The policies and practices of the department should aim to demonstrate an understanding of, and champion, these elements including cultural competency in the

development, application and monitoring of the policies and practices of the department at every level of the organisation. This also includes the tools, systems and processes required to deliver and monitor the measurable outcomes that impact on the wellbeing of tamariki Māori and young persons who come to the attention of the department. Enabling settings in this layer will allow this to occur. Enabling settings should aim to operationalise the policies and practices and include the tools, systems and processes required to deliver and monitor the measurable outcomes.

The importance of senior leadership of Oranga Tamariki and the leadership of other agencies to demonstrate an understanding of and the importance of cultural identity (as noted by the five elements), and champion cultural competency cannot be emphasised enough.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also contend that all who engage with tamariki Māori and their whānau must demonstrate an understanding of and the importance of cultural identity and champion, cultural competency. We note for example, the role that a Kairaranga currently plays. We contend that it is the Kairaranga (or a similar role) who should be monitoring the cultural capability and capacity of social workers and the ability of social workers to engage with whānau Māori. The Kairaranga are after all the experts of cultural competency when compared with the majority of social workers, many of whom lack expertise in this area. It is not enough to simply give the task of finding whānau to the Kairaranga and then leave the decisions that have a lasting impact on whānau to social workers who may not have an understanding of the importance of cultural identity and cultural competency and how to operationalise these concepts. Properly understanding Māori whānau and their communities is also essential to addressing institutional racism and ‘unconscious bias that may also contribute to institutional racism.

Recommendation 2: That a ‘how to layer’ that demonstrates an understanding of cultural identity, and champions cultural competency, be developed to assist in the development, operation and implementation of the policies and practices of the department that impact on the well-being of tamariki Māori and young persons, and that all who engage with tamariki Māori. This should include senior leadership of other agencies (including Oranga Tamariki senior leadership) and staff at all levels to demonstrate an understanding of, and champion, cultural competency and that the role that Kairaranga play have a greater acknowledgment in the application of cultural competency.

*Making Sense of the Numbers: Te Huruuru Manu: Achieving Equity for Māori (2018)*² identifies and quantifies aspects of inequity in Aotearoa. The report focuses on education and income and identifies that the Māori population within Aotearoa is young and growing much faster than non-Māori and that with this growth, the missed opportunities from the perpetuating inequity will continue to grow if left unchecked. Income is acknowledged as

² Change Agenda: Income Equity for Māori (2018): Tokona Te Raki Māori Futures Collective. Authors: Hillmare Schulze and Sam Green, BERL.

being one of the key socio-economic variables influencing health status. The flow on effect of the income gap is not just poor health outcomes, but decreased home ownership, differences in opportunities in education and so on. Maintaining current health inequities could see increasing health costs and declining outcomes into the future. Conversely, addressing these inequities could see increased Māori health outcomes and decreased social spend.

Recommendation 3: That Section 7AA include a requirement for reporting on Māori specific measurements to ensure that any plans or targets focus on the right areas and target children in greatest need.

Recommendation 4: That the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes accurately reflects children and young people in the context of their families and communities and ensures mutually reinforcing action takes place at all levels to support their wellbeing.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu recognises the importance of taking a whānau-centred, intergenerational, self-determining, holistic approach to wellbeing, and provide direct impact for whānau to enable independent transformation. We also recognise the importance of taking a whānau-centred approach in understanding tamariki in the context of their homes, whānau, hapū, iwi, communities and the country and considering their rights, interests and wellbeing within these contexts.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also supports the requirement for children’s agencies to work together to improve the wellbeing of children, but this must be considered in the context of the whānau. We acknowledge that a collective and collaborative response is needed together with cross-sector strategies and actions to make the greatest difference.

We acknowledge the importance to support whānau so that their tamariki may return home to them from the state system. This may include ensuring the whānau get the right support needed to address the challenges in their lives so that their tamariki may be returned to them. It may be in the form of early intervention with the whānau of tamariki or perhaps bringing ‘whānau pou’ or potential whānau caregivers into the frame earlier wherever possible to avoid the situation of tamariki being removed from their parents or whānau thereby giving a practical application to the notions of mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga. It also allows whānau to achieve positive outcomes and maintain whānau wellbeing for themselves giving life to the five elements identified in cultural identity – namely whakapapa, mana, rangatiratanga, tūrangawaewae and tikanga.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also contend that the notion of ‘whānau’ needs to be understood in its widest context particularly where Māori children are concerned. Selecting whānau members as placements needs to be more flexible to allow for a wider circle of ‘whānau’. However, a whole of whānau support approach is still needed to ensure that the wellbeing of children is considered within a safe and thriving environment that “*strengthens*

their connection to their families, whānau, hapū and iwi, or other culturally appropriate recognised family”.

Recommendation 5: That whānau receive the support that they need and that the application of mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga are recognised as being interrelated and should be considered together, and that the roles and obligations of whānau, hapū and iwi are intertwined with whakapapa and whanaungatanga and therefore mana tamaiti.

For a successful Government strategy for improving children’s wellbeing and Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu recommends that:

- the government implement a ‘whole of whānau’ approach to improving child wellbeing and that this is not limited to ‘at risk’ indicators as they are currently set out;
- children within the context of whānau are at the centre of any policies, plans and processes and that the Government design and implement guidelines to allow for this.

We also recommend that the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes be linked to other policies and legislation.

Recommendation 6: That the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes be linked to other policies and legislation such as the:

- * ***Child Poverty Reduction Act (passed on 18 December 2018),***
- * ***Living Standards Framework,***
- * ***He Oati mō ngā Taitamariki ō tō tātou Whenua A Covenant for Our Nation's Children***
- * ***Child Wellbeing Strategy – (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC))***
- * ***Social Investment Agency (SIA) wellbeing work programme***
- * ***Lifetime Child Wellbeing Model (Oranga Tamariki)***
- * ***The Social Report (Ministry for Social Development),***
- * ***Sustainable Development Goals Reporting - Ministry for Foreign Affairs,***
- * ***United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and***
- * ***United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.***

Enabling Settings

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also recommends adding another layer to the proposed outcomes framework between the underpinning principles and the desired outcomes, to describe how Section 7AA will be operationalised. This layer could include the enabling settings required to support and deliver Section 7AA and could embed processes to ensure the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the purpose of the Child Poverty Reduction Act (passed on 18 December 2018), the Living Standards Framework, the principles of He Oati mō ngā Taitamariki ō tō tātou Whenua - A Covenant for Our Nation's Children; the Child Wellbeing Strategy, the Social Investment Agency (SIA) wellbeing work programme, the Lifetime Child

Wellbeing Model (Oranga Tamariki), the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child are given effect. This 'enabling settings' layer could include things like:

- **Child Impact Analysis** - Conducting a child impact analysis at every stage of Section 7AA (design, implementation, delivery and monitoring) to ensure children's rights are being upheld, impact on children is well understood, children have had their voices heard, and there are no unintended consequences. Such an analysis should of course, recognise the context of a child within a whānau, hapū or iwi. Every child impact analysis should at a minimum ask:
 - How will this impact on children?
 - Will there be differential impacts?
 - What do children and young people think?

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has a Child Impact Analysis Tool which could be used for this purpose including:

- **Tamariki and young person's participation**- Embedding mechanisms at every stage to enable children to participate and have their voices heard. Ensuring ongoing engagement with children through the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages of each focus area. Ensuring processes are in place to incorporate children's views into practices and policies.
- **Investment, budget setting and monitoring** - Transparently and regularly measuring and tracking resource allocation and spending on children's wellbeing as part of Section 7AA implementation strategy. Assessing the impact of investments for children in line with the principles and provisions of the policies and legislation noted in Recommendation 6 including the Children's Convention.
- **Resourcing communities** - Ensuring communities are adequately resourced and have the capability and capacity to support children's wellbeing. Whānau need to be supported so that tamariki can return home to their families as opposed to staying in state care.
- **Training and supports** - Ensuring the people and organisations who are key to the success of Section 7AA receive children's rights and wellbeing training and training in cultural competency to support and enable the successful application and implementation of Section 7AA.

There also needs to be adequate resourcing to build the Māori workforce and capability in the sector and where a strategic relationship has been entered into with iwi, this relationship needs to be resourced to build capacity.

- **Data** - Ensuring the collection, storage and sharing of information about children related to the delivery of Section 7AA is consistent with privacy and information rights and the views and best interests of all children.

Additionally, there needs to be clear and transparent policy, protocols and processes on how Oranga Tamariki regularly share and exchange data should they enter into any strategic partnership with iwi about many of their tamariki in care, who they are and where they are located.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - Designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation framework so that progress towards the desired outcomes and vision of section 7AA is tracked and monitored over time. Monitoring should be iterative and aim to capture and integrate lessons learned along the way. Monitoring should also be inclusive of all stakeholders, particularly children and young people, and their families and whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities.

Recommendation 7: That consideration and inclusion of the above enabling settings to be actioned to support, deliver and give effect to Section 7AA.

Tracking of Interim Progress

We note that the Government is setting targets aimed at reducing poverty, but these targets should require solid social and economic policies if they are to be achieved and need to be supported. The breadth and depth of child poverty in New Zealand reveals that improvement will take time and will not be easy. A broad, strategic approach is needed to ensure the targets are met and that a reduction in child poverty is sustained long-term in order to support vulnerable whānau.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu acknowledges that reaching our most vulnerable is challenging. However, without specific reference in legislation, agencies might be at risk of only accessing the ‘easiest to reach’ children as opposed to those most in need. We support the focus on policies, practices, and services that have the objective of reducing disparities and addressing inequalities to support accessing the most vulnerable. We also support the requirement to report specifically on targets and plans for Māori children in any action generated by this section of the legislation be undertaken. However, we contend that it is important to track interim progress to assess whether policies are on track to achieve targets and that the tracking of the interim progress assess whether policies are on track to achieve the targets be established.

Recommendation 8: That the tracking of the interim progress to assess whether policies are on track to achieve the targets be established.

The connection between targets and policies

We caution against an over-emphasis on measures and targets, to the detriment of the adequate scrutiny of policies that are supposed to meet these targets. It is important that development of policy is undertaken in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including whānau, hapū and iwi, independent organisations, including NGOs and social service providers who are experts involved in the promotion and protection of children’s rights and needs, and that the voices of children and their whānau are also heard in this process.

As well as reporting under this section of **Section 7AA** of the **Children, Young Persons and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017**, adequate resources must be devoted to assessing the suitability of new policies to meet objectives. Te Pūtahitanga o

Te Waipounamu supports the reporting of transparent reporting of measurable outcomes.

The opportunity for Whānau Ora entities to broker support for whānau

“If Whānau Ora interventions are not whānau determined and whānau actioned, then change will be less likely to be sustainable, as whānau will be worked on rather than worked with” (Tipu Matoro ki te Ao, p44).

Due to the circumstances in which community empowerment arises, typically from social action, and in response to ‘the interests and processes that are causing marginalisation, poverty and powerlessness’ it can be hard for individuals to agree to work in collaboration with those agencies they see as complicit in the issues.³

Many change agents are reluctant to engage with ‘state agencies, local government and business interests.’ Therefore, the value of organisations who act as ‘mediators’ between community or whānau groups and such agencies have real value. This is because of the atmosphere of trust that exists between mediator groups and those desiring change. In this regard, the opportunity for Whānau Ora entities and Whānau Ora Navigators to work directly with whānau must be recognised.

The recent national review of Whānau Ora, Tipu Matoro ki te Ao, reported that Whānau Ora Navigators are seen as crucial, in helping whānau to ‘heal the past, deal with the now and plan for sustainable change’. The report reflected that whānau place high levels of confidence and trust in their navigators, particularly noting that they were part of the community and therefore invested in its success.

The Whānau Ora navigator approach has been identified by the Productivity Commission as a key example of an integrated whānau-centred approach supporting seamless access to health and social services. Reports from whānau and providers, as well as research, shows that when whānau work with navigators they experience significant benefits including improved outcomes across education, employment and income.

In most of the cases, the needs of whānau who come to the attention of Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu are too complex to be fulfilled by any one government agency. Navigators work with a wide variety of service providers that include government departments, Māori health providers or social services providers, marae and rūnanga, justice sector agencies, among many others, to prioritise and facilitate resolution of whānau needs. The complexity of these needs means that it is almost impossible for whānau to navigate through the siloed government support system, leaving them incapable of accessing the support available to them and feeling demotivated and disempowered to turn their lives around. The process of prioritisation, an in-depth

³ Loomis, "Community-Led Development in Aotearoa New Zealand: Dead End or New Opportunity?" 9.

knowledge of the supports available from the various government and non-government agencies, the relationship of trust, and finally the strength-based approach applied by the navigators create a solid foundation for addressing whānau needs and fulfilling their inspirations. They are uniquely placed to support whānau who are struggling to make ends meet.

The Government could also be transparent about their long-term budgetary plans, emphasising a review of spending according to the needs of children revealed after interim reporting.

The recent review of Whānau Ora breaks new ground in recommending the government grow its investment in Whānau Ora while also migrating a whānau-centred approach across the wider State services.

The review identifies specific challenges for the wider state services and the Whānau Ora approach.

The first challenge relates to a lack of support for the Whānau Ora approach in Wellington, despite good evidence and strong performance of the three commissioning agencies.

The second challenge relates to leadership. The report says when Whānau Ora was first established it envisaged wider government support and complementary effort being applied to via broad-based ministerial participation in the Partnership Group and involvement of Chief Executives in the Advisory Group. The review finds that this did not happen to the extent that was required, and this has been detrimental to Whānau Ora.

The final challenge relates to the lack of capability in the State services to deliver whānau-centred approaches. The review recommends the application of whānau-centred approaches across government and encourages their uptake.

We believe these issues are of fundamental importance in understanding how to secure a stronger application of Section 7AA across both government and the broader social sector.

Recommendation 9: That the Government should consult widely with independent bodies (including whānau, hapū, iwi) on policy evaluation, design and implementation, as well as expenditure undertaken to reduce disparities and that any reporting be transparent and detail the Government's long-term budgetary plans, emphasising a review of spending according to the needs of children revealed after interim reporting.

Managing financial programmes including budgeting services and poverty reduction is a pillar in the long-term resilience of whānau. Whānau Ora has provided whānau with an opportunity to realise their potential and to create opportunities that did not previously exist. Through Whānau Ora commissioning there has been a plethora of applications for investment from whānau that have an intimate knowledge of the challenges, and solutions to address poverty. The respondents have engaged with whānau business start-ups, cultural strengthening, education, leadership, fitness and inspiring transformation within communities.

One example of a whānau community development initiative that has received investment and resources from Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is Whānau Smart,

Whānau Wise – Whānau Hihiko, Whānau Manaaki. This initiative was created from whānau members at a Kōhanga Reo in Ōtepoti (Dunedin) who collectively chose to rise to the challenge to ‘beat poverty and create a strengths-based approach for whānau to be smart and to be wise. The fundamental aspirations of this group are to end inter-generational issues underpinned by poverty. This whānau have defined that financial literacy growth and development for all ages is a key component to long term success.

Strategic Partnerships

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu supports strategic relationships between iwi and the Crown as every measure needs to be taken to reconnect tamariki Māori and their whānau, with their hapū and with their iwi where possible. To this end we support the following sections of Section 7AA:

(c) the department seeks to develop strategic partnerships with iwi and Māori organisations, including iwi authorities, in order to –

(i) provide opportunities to, and invite innovative proposals from, those organisations to improve outcomes for Māori children, young persons, and their whānau who come to the attention of the department:

(ii) set expectations and targets to improve outcomes for Māori children and young persons who come to the attention of the department:

(iii) enable the robust, regular, and genuine exchange of information between the department and those organisations:

(iv) provide opportunities for the chief executive to delegate functions under this Act or regulations made under this Act to appropriately qualified people within those organisations:

(v) provide, and regularly review, guidance to persons discharging functions under this Act to support cultural competency as a best-practice feature of the department’s workforce:

(vi) agree on any action both or all parties consider is appropriate.

(3) One or more iwi or Māori organisations may invite the chief executive to enter into a strategic partnership.

(4) The chief executive must consider and respond to any invitation.

(5) The chief executive must report to the public at least once a year on the measures taken by the chief executive to carry out the duties in subsections (2) and (4), including the impact of those measures in improving outcomes for Māori children and young persons who come to the attention of the department under this Act and the steps to be taken in the immediate future.

(6) A copy of each report under subsection (5) must be published on an Internet site maintained by the department.

However, we do note that there is currently an imbalance between Māori and mainstream service providers and this needs to be addressed. This imbalance should also not flow on to any

strategic partnerships with hapū and iwi. The focus for Oranga Tamariki should be resourcing to build capacity with partners who can work most effectively with whānau and we believe hapū and iwi have a role to play in this.

Concluding Comments

We note that the parameters for support provision via the mechanism of the Ministry for Children must extend beyond and not be limited to current at-risk criteria. Poverty and disability have a direct impact on children's outcomes, and a goal of improving physical and mental health of the children will only be met if families are sufficiently resourced to meet all their basic needs, which include having healthy food, warm clothes and a safe, warm home with security of tenure.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also contends that a supportive whole-of-whānau approach to ensuring the welfare of children referred to the Ministry must be taken, within the Ministry, within other government agencies and with the involvement of relevant social services and assistance to ensure that all children are in safe and thriving home environments. There must also be a consideration for the importance of the place of the child in Māori society and its relationship with whānau, hapū, and iwi structures noting that a safe and warm environment and a connection to identity and culture are not mutually exclusive.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu wants to reiterate its support for the recent amendments to the Oranga Tamariki Act to encompass revised principles of the Act which include recognising mana tamaiti, whakapapa and the practice of whanaungatanga. We suggest these three principles are an important foundation for improving the wellbeing of Māori children within the context of whānau.

The use of data to determine targeted at-risk funding must be re-evaluated to ensure that ALL children have timely access to the services they need throughout their lives. A concern remains that many children who fall outside the current risk criteria will fall through gaps. All public services that interact with the needs of children must be well-resourced to enable them to provide quality care to all children when they are sought.

A lack of value currently given to parenting compromises any value given to children. As a result, we have a deepening crisis of poverty that impacts most severely on children in families that are in receipt of a welfare benefit, in particular sole-parent families where there is a full-time caregiver. The principle of value for the unpaid role of the caregiver, alongside paid employment should underpin the design for a successful Child Wellbeing Strategy.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu notes that Māori and Pasifika families are disproportionately represented among the numbers in poverty and in receipt of welfare benefits, and face barriers within the welfare system that are likely to worsen their hardship. Policies in place that undermine parenting as a valuable contribution to, by prioritising work, inadvertently create barriers for many who cannot obtain meaningful paid work, or a balance of meaningful paid work that supports their children's needs and

alleviates hardship. To improve the outcomes for children, the economic impacts on families of a welfare system that has paid work as the paramount principle must be reviewed.

For a successful Government strategy for improving children's wellbeing and Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu recommends that:

- The government implement a 'whole of whānau' approach to improving child wellbeing and that this is not limited to 'at risk' indicators as they are currently set out.
- Children within the context of whānau are at the centre of any policies, plans and processes and that the Government design and implement guidelines to allow for this.
- The design and implementation of a Child Wellbeing Strategy be applied across all Government agencies and policy areas.
- The Government recognise and promote the value of unpaid caregiving as a key strategy for child wellbeing, by removal of any parental discrimination which compromises parents' ability to adequately care for their children, such as couples-rate benefits, sanctions for non-compliance, and exclusion from tax credits.
- The Government introduce new policy solutions across sectors to address wider systemic issues that impact on families in poverty, as part of a Children's Wellbeing Strategy.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu welcomes the opportunity to meet again with appropriate officials to discuss any aspect of this Submission.



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Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu