



## BACKGROUND PAPER 8: WHĀNAU ORA

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### Introduction

In 2009, Minister Turia established the Taskforce on Whānau-centred Initiatives. The purpose of the Taskforce is to shift policy across government. Currently all service delivery is based on responding to individual need by providers with a specific/narrow role. Whānau Ora sees a shift from an individualistic focus in the delivery of services to one where the whānau needs are centrally placed. The model also seeks to integrate the work done across government and by numerous providers, and will apply across: community and social development, Māori development, health, education, justice, and housing. The model also suggests that funding for Whānau Ora objectives should be unbundled from specific government departments and transferred to a Whānau Ora fund.

The members of the Taskforce are: Professor Mason Durie (chair), Rob Cooper, Suzanne Snively, Di Grennell, Nancy Tuaine, and Linda Grennell. The Taskforce released a discussion paper in September 2009 that provided an overview of the philosophy and implementation of a Whānau Ora model. This background paper on Whānau Ora is largely drawn from that discussion paper.

The next steps in Whānau Ora policy development is that the Taskforce will report back to Minister Turia in January 2010 and it is expected that the policy will move through Cabinet decisions, full scoping and implementation this year. The Prime Minister positively discussed Whānau Ora at Ratana.

### Context

Whānau Ora is intended to overcome the current barriers to whānau well being through providing for whānau, hapū and Iwi to exercise their capabilities and responsibilities for whānau well being.

Some of the barriers to whānau well-being have been described as:

1. An individualistic focus in the delivery of services.
2. The lack of cohesion across government agencies. Services to whānau members are provided by a number of sectors, often resulting in inconsistencies, fragmentation, overlaps in service delivery, duplication of effort, and frequently confusion and frustration for those seeking assistance. Moreover, because each agency usually focuses on a particular problem experienced by an individual whānau member (such as truancy or chronic illness) an opportunity for a sustainable whānau-wide approach to resolve problems is lost.
3. Interventions often place whānau in passive roles. Where whānau are excluded from decision making processes or are not actively involved early in planning interventions, their participation is compromised often to the point where disengagement from the process is inevitable.
4. Some whānau end up with several agencies and service providers in their everyday life to the point that it becomes a “normalised” experience. A cycle of intrusion, dependency or disengagement results.
5. Many services are focused on crisis intervention. Building whānau capability to prevent crises and to manage a crisis when it does arise, should underpin whānau interventions. It is of limited long-term benefit to simply address a crisis without also strengthening whānau and decreasing the likelihood of crises in the future. Within a single whānau a series of crises may affect different whānau members but if a whānau-wide view is not taken, the relationship of one crisis to another may never be recognised and dealt with.

6. A further barrier for many service providers is linked to the ways that government funding and contracting are arranged. More often than not funding and contracting are transactional rather than relational. The focus is on inputs and outputs rather than long-term outcomes and innovation. The imposition of time-consuming and resource-intensive performance monitoring processes could be better spent working closely with whānau to develop meaningful measures of effectiveness.

### Whānau Ora Model

The aims of Whānau Ora are to recommend a model of service delivery that is centred on whānau and which leads to the best possible outcomes in an efficient and effective manner. The Whānau Ora model is depicted in the diagram below:



The inner segments of the picture represent the key policy changes that will result from Whānau Ora, and the outer rim of words are the principles that Whānau Ora is based on.

The key policy changes resulting from Whānau Ora are:

- **Whānau action and engagement:** that policy will be based on endorsing whānau strengths and encouraging whānau ownership of solutions and actions.
- **Whānau-centred design and delivery of services:** that the design and delivery of services will place whānau at the centre and build on the strengths and capabilities already present in whānau.
- **Iwi leadership:** recognising that whānau, hapū and iwi have critical and distinct roles to play in facilitating whānau ora and that these roles are based on whakapapa connections and lie largely outside government interventions.

- **Active and responsive government:** government agencies should be responsive and flexible enough to align with and support whānau, hapū and iwi aspirations.
- **Funding:** funding arrangements should be consistent with a whānau-centred approach to service delivery. The focus should be on a relational approach to the relationship between providers and government agencies, which focuses on best outcomes for whānau.

The initial and practical policy changes that are proposed include changes to:

- outcome indicators
- funding arrangements
- providers
- government.

### **Outcome indicators**

Two sets of indicators will be used to measure the success of whānau ora interventions. Individual indicators (such as health status or employment) will provide measures relevant to individual whānau members. But in addition, outcome indicators associated with the whānau as a whole will be employed. While whānau satisfaction will be an important indicator of provider effectiveness, there will be greater reliance on indicators that are capable of measuring increases in whānau strengths such as a capacity to care for each other, to transmit knowledge and values, to model healthy lifestyles, provide access to society and to te ao Māori, and to transfer language, culture and ethics between generations.

### **Funding arrangements**

A whānau ora fund will be established, derived from those sectors that have current obligations to Māori consistent with the whānau ora objectives. Criteria for accessing the fund will also be consistent with the whānau ora objectives and the outcomes sought. A fund-holding agency will commission services, support whānau development initiatives, and be responsible for overseeing the management of the fund.

### **Providers**

The whānau ora model is based on a comprehensive approach to whānau. It is expected that effective providers will be those that have skills and experience across a range of sectors and also have the skills necessary for working with whānau collectives. Some existing providers have the breadth and depth to achieve this easily. Others may have specialist services or currently have contracts through one main funder. In order to retain both specialist skills and the contribution of small providers it is likely that mechanisms to support effective provider linking will also be developed. Although the proposal recognises that formal training in whānau interventions is currently limited and is more often an “add-on” to other tasks, within a number of provider organisations there is a sufficient capability to intervene positively with whānau.

### **Government**

A number of government sectors and agencies have whānau ora as an objective even though relatively few measure their effectiveness according to improved changes in whānau capabilities. This proposal will have particular relevance for chief executives and staff generally of government agencies that hold whānau ora resources across sectors including: community and social development, Māori development, health, education, justice, and housing. An important aspect of the proposal will be determining how resources allocated for whānau ora objectives can be unbundled and transferred to a whānau ora fund.