

NGĀ TINI WHETŪ PROTOTYPE EVALUATION

30 June 2023



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He mihi

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

Ka rere tonu ngā kupu whakamihi ki ētahi o ngā kaimahi o Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, arā koutou ko ngā Regional Coordinators, Programme Managers me ngā Kaiārahi mo te tautoko i a mātau ki te whakauru i ngā kaiuru.

Na, ko te kupu whakamutunga nōku ko te tukuna mihi nunui ki ngā whānau. Nā rātau i whakaatu mai i o rātau wheako me o rātau kōrero mai i ngā tōpito o Te Ika a Māui. He tino rawe rātau, he manaaki hoki i o rātau mohiotanga. Nā mātou te honore nui, nā koutou i tuku whakaaro mai. Kia taea ai e mātou te tuitui tēnei kohinga kōrero.

Tēnā rawa atu koutou katoa.

Executive summary

Introduction

Ngā Tini Whetū is a government-funded prototype that resources whānau Māori to provide their own solutions to best meet their aspirations. It is grounded in te ao Māori, delivered through the Whānau Ora approach and focused on whānau centred outcomes. It extended early support to 800 whānau Māori across Te Ika-a-Māui, to prioritise tamariki and whānau wellbeing between 2020-2022.

The Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA), two government agencies (Oranga Tamariki and Te Puni Kōkiri) and a Crown entity (the Accident Compensation Corporation) developed the inter-agency support model. A combined government investment of \$42.2 million was committed over two years to commission the prototype and its services from WOCA.

The prototype was a testing ground for government on a number of levels: several public entities pooled resources into a Whānau Ora model of delivery; the model proactively worked with whānau and their goals, rather than resource crisis response; and mainstream agencies purchased services from WOCA and worked together to co-design the model. The main design features of the prototype were the recruitment of kaiārahi who worked intensively with a small group of whānau and the provision of Te Kete Oranga financial support to help action goals and aspirations.

Purpose

This is the report on the summative evaluation of the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype. The evaluation looks at how well Ngā Tini Whetū enabled whānau to thrive and achieve their potential. The evaluation considered what conditions, settings, and practices can support an effective interagency initiative.

Approach

In 2021, Oranga Tamariki contracted Aiko Consultants Limited to complete the evaluation. Information was gathered through the desktop review and semi-structured interviews with 75 key stakeholders including whānau, kaiārahi, programme managers, regional coordinators, WOCA and agency officials from February to December 2022.

The data collected from the desktop review and interviews are presented through findings and four whānau case studies. The case studies showcase the diverse journeys travelled by whānau and the different ways Ngā Tini Whetū has supported them to make positive shifts in their lives towards achieving their goals and aspirations.

Key findings

The programme was considered transformational for whānau.

In terms of *whānau experience and outcomes*, consistent themes included:

- Whānau experience of Ngā Tini Whetū was overwhelmingly positive, and many found it life-changing due to the impact it had on many elements of their lives
- Key aspects that supported success were the personal, sustained guidance from the kaiārahi, a focus on whānau strengths and aspirations, supported planning and access to services, and Te Kete Oranga

- Intentional and supported dreaming and planning for the future set whānau up well and helped avoid what could be costly alternative routes
- Positive benefits for tamariki and the whole whānau were seen when barriers like debt and addiction were addressed in the house, leading to reduced family stress and hopefulness
- Greater resilience was evident among whānau because they had gained (self) agency, learned new skills and where to get other forms of help if needed, as well as the confidence to access them
- Many whānau strengthened their cultural connection to te ao Māori and were learning te reo Māori – building more protective factors for the future for adults and their tamariki
- Some evidence of increased social and community connections via whānau workshops and other kaiārahi-led activities.

During the evaluation, we found that *whānau needed certain things at different stages*:

- Initial scepticism had to be overcome in order for them to join the programme, based on mistrust of government and low expectations of effective public service support
- Whānau needed to be in a state of readiness to acknowledge and action moemoeā
- Kaiārahi had to invest time in whakawhanaungatanga and manaaki – at the pace and on the terms set by whānau. Once trusted, everything was possible.
- Barriers to dreaming needed to be identified and addressed
- Te Kete Oranga was critical to actualising aspirations but dependent on planning and essential skill-development (e.g., budgeting) first
- A level of resilience helped participating whānau cope with change (kaiārahi turnover, COVID-19).

In terms of the specific *Ngā Tini Whetū approach and its settings*, we found:

- A Kaupapa Māori approach is trusted by whānau Māori, enabling recruitment and commitment to Ngā Tini Whetū which led to positive outcomes
- Delivery by local Whānau Ora partners contributed to how well whānau were engaged and connected them to other services they needed
- Not having mainstream services lead this programme out was advantageous to build trust, but there were benefits to their involvement (aside from funding) for whānau
- The personal care and experience of kaiārahi was the most critical component of Ngā Tini Whetū for supporting whānau outcomes
- A challenge for a few partners and kaiārahi was changing practice to support whānau aspirations rather than crisis response
- The 1:10 kaiārahi to whānau ratio and the amount of Te Kete Oranga pūtea are considered as set at the right levels
- A one-year duration worked well for some but there is a case for flexibility.

Findings related to how the *Ngā Tini Whetū approach fits within the broader government system* include:

- This unique inter-agency collaboration worked well for whānau because agencies maintained distance from implementation

- Whānau Ora is an effective delivery model for whānau Māori, as tested since 2014, and there are robust systems in place to provide assurance
- Agencies were constrained by the system's individualised portfolios and focus on risk which challenged working in a holistic, whānau-centred way
- High public service turnover impeded consistency of support and internal leadership for innovative approaches like Ngā Tini Whetū
- Regional agency offices lacked awareness of Ngā Tini Whetū which could have been an opportunity for developing local inter-agency relationships, cultural capability building (through working with kaiārahi and partners) as well as easing service access for whānau.

Conclusions

Government investment in Ngā Tini Whetū supported the achievement of transformational whānau outcomes that would not have been achieved otherwise.

Whānau involved in Ngā Tini Whetū advanced their goals, gained numerous skills as part of the process (e.g., budgeting), increased self-agency and hopefulness for their futures. Whānau were more aware of steps to improve health and prevent injuries and whānau actively made changes to improve family life and outcomes for tamariki.

The programme worked because whānau developed a plan to achieve their aspirations with a local, tikanga-based, personalised support person (Kaiārahi) to guide and connect only as needed over a year. The approach was strengths-based and holistic, removing barriers and enabling goals to be achieved with discretionary funding.

The focus for whānau was to keep on the path towards Mauri oho, flourishing whānau with mana, as described by Tā Mason Durie's framework for Ngā Tini Whetū. This framing for whānau was essential to its success. Working in a strengths-based way is a game changer for whānau: it is enabling, empowering and mana-enhancing through the highs, lows and everything in between that whānau experience.

WOCA delivered the prototype with its network of local partners, including monitoring and comprehensive reporting, despite also delivering essential services in aid of COVID-19. Whānau ora has been tested since 2014 and is a proven, Crown-endorsed model.

Crown agencies successfully co-funded the prototype but their efforts to be innovative and work better for Māori were not well supported by inflexible funding mechanisms, inconsistent governance and insufficient internal communications and support for the prototype.

Bold ministerial and official-level leadership ensured the prototype was supported initially but personnel changes and different priorities meant that inter-agency oversight was inconsistent over the two years. Whānau were protected from this by the Crown's distance from implementation.

In sum, the prototype delivered on its intended outcomes and deliverables for whānau. Whānau spoke openly about how this programme supported transformation and a positive shift in mindset. As a result, whānau felt better equipped to meet and overcome future challenges, seize opportunities and exercise rangatiratanga in their lives.

Introduction

1. Te mana kaha o te whānau – the inherent strength and wisdom within whānau Māori is intergenerational, passed down to whānau, hapū and Iwi through whakapapa – genealogical bloodlines. The recognition, activation, practice and celebration of this strength in contemporary Aotearoa lies at the heart of Whānau Ora. Decolonising, reclaiming, indigenising and reimagining a future where all whānau thrive is the method, the rongoā, the journey and the destination.
2. Whānau Ora is a culturally grounded approach to improving the wellbeing of whānau as a group while addressing individual needs. Expressed in many different ways by Māori, it puts whānau at the centre of decision-making about their wellbeing and supports them to identify and achieve their goals. A whānau centred focus is proven to lead to better outcomes for whānau, Māori and Aotearoa, culturally socially and economically.
3. Ngā Tini Whetū is a government-funded prototype resourcing whānau Māori to provide their own solutions to best meet their aspirations. It is grounded in te ao Māori, delivered through the Whānau Ora approach and focused on whānau centred outcomes.
4. The Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA), two government agencies (Oranga Tamariki and Te Puni Kōkiri) and a Crown entity (the Accident Compensation Corporation)¹ developed the inter-agency support model for whānau Māori where early signs of risk have been identified. A combined government investment of \$42.2 million was committed over two years to commission the prototype and its services from WOCA.²
5. The Ngā Tini Whetū prototype extended early support to 800 whānau Māori across Te Ika-a-Māui, to aid tamariki and whānau wellbeing. It aims to address current gaps in government services and supports, particularly for whānau Māori build stronger relationships between government agencies leading to better social, cultural and health outcomes for whānau.
6. This early intervention approach is a testing ground for government on a number of levels:
 - several public entities are pooling resources into a Whānau Ora model of service delivery
 - the model proactively works with whānau and their goals, rather than resourcing crisis response
 - mainstream agencies are purchasing service delivery from the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency and worked together to co-design the model.
7. Evaluation of Ngā Tini Whetū is intended to help inform how whānau-centred approaches can operate in the field of early support and how improvements can be made to the wider system. The results of the evaluation will also be used to learn about the impact of decentralising resources to Māori and communities and better understand the dynamics involved when agencies collaborate and pool funding for outcomes.

¹ The two government agencies and Crown entity will be collectively referred to as “the agencies” in this report.

² Te Puni Kōkiri and Oranga Tamariki each invested \$16 million and ACC invested \$10.4 million over the two years.

8. This was a Kaupapa Māori evaluation which means we privilege learning from those we interview and acknowledge the validity of a Māori worldview. We gained perspective and insight from 75 evaluation participants: whānau, kaiārahi, programme managers, regional coordinators, WOCA and agency officials.

Background

9. The Ngā Tini Whetū prototype was developed in large part due to the over-representation of tamariki Māori in youth justice and state care and protection. The total number of children in the care of the Oranga Tamariki has been reducing in recent years but the rate of tamariki Māori and Māori/Pacific in care is still unacceptably high at 68 percent.³ This disproportionality continues in youth justice with 86 percent of those in residences identifying as Māori or Māori/Pacific.
10. Ngā Tini Whetū privileges Whānau Ora and a commissioning for outcomes approach, with leadership shared by WOCA and the agencies. In addition to testing the impact of this new approach on a large number of whānau, this prototype was an opportunity to assess how system settings and funding mechanisms can work behind inter-agency Whānau Ora commissioning.

Whānau Ora Commissioning

11. Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA - formerly Te Pou Matakana) has served the North Island since 2014, supporting the aspirations of whānau (families). WOCA commissions community service providers that support whānau to achieve their goals, seeks investment opportunities that support whānau aspirations and works alongside Whānau Ora partners to build on the strengths and assets of whānau and their communities.
12. Commissioning activities aim to achieve whānau outcomes. Outcomes are identified by whānau themselves but at a macro level mean whānau will enjoy good health, experience economic wellbeing, be knowledgeable and well informed, be culturally secure, resilient, self-managing and able to participate fully in te ao Māori and in wider society.
13. The attributes of the Whānau Ora model of delivery include:
 - focus shifts from ‘services for individuals’ to ‘wrapping services around whānau’ (whānau-centred and holistic).
 - specialist Navigators assist whānau with sometimes complex needs to access integrated care and support, while helping them build their own capacity and resilience
 - community based Whānau Ora partners sit in the communities they support, using local knowledge and services.
14. In 2017, WOCA trialled the original Ngā Tini Whetū collective impact delivery model with a sample of Whānau Ora partners. The initiative was designed “to empower whānau to build capacity in order to flourish”.⁴ Supported by a comprehensive evaluation model, the two-year pilot evidenced positive outcomes for whānau as a result of this way of working (Durie, 2017).

³ In care and protection: 57% Māori, 11% Māori/Pacific; in youth justice: 73% Māori, 13% Māori/Pacific. Refer <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/performance-and-monitoring/quarterly-report/text-only/>

⁴ Professor Meihana Durie (2017). *Ngā Tini whetū – A navigational strategy for whānau journeys*. Community-led research article on Waipareira.com, p.28.

The model was reignited as a result of discussions held between the previous Minister for Children, Tracey Martin, and WOCA Chief Executive in late 2019.

15. By the following year, the decision had been made to trial Ngā Tini Whetū as an early intervention approach delivered through WOCA and backed by government entities working together. Te Puni Kōkiri and the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) joined Oranga Tamariki in the venture. This was the first time two government agencies and a Crown entity collaborated and pooled funding to partner with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency.

The context for state agencies participating in Ngā Tini Whetū

Oranga Tamariki

16. Since 31 March 2017, Oranga Tamariki has been on a comprehensive transformation and change process, led by the former Chief Executive. By the end of 2019, Oranga Tamariki was an agency under significant public and political scrutiny fuelled by media coverage of the attempted Oranga Tamariki uplift at Hastings Hospital.
17. As a result, the Minister for Children was keen to look at how Oranga Tamariki could work differently with whānau by partnering with WOCA, and how Whānau Ora might support better outcomes for tamariki and whānau.

Te Puni Kōkiri

18. Te Puni Kōkiri was brought into Ngā Tini Whetū in early 2020, when the Child and Wellbeing Lead shifted from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to take up their Deputy Chief Executive Policy role. Te Puni Kōkiri entered the partnership with the benefit of an established working relationship with WOCA. In practice, this meant Te Puni Kōkiri understood the Whānau Ora approach and what it means to commission for outcomes, and they had trust in WOCA and its Whānau Ora partners' ability to deliver and achieve positive outcomes for whānau.
19. In addition to the Deputy Chief Executive Policy's leadership, the relationship between Te Puni Kōkiri and WOCA was strengthened by a fellow Deputy Chief Executive who was deeply involved in the development of the commissioning approach and establishing both Whānau Ora agencies. Given this, Te Puni Kōkiri was well placed to execute its role as the lead agency facilitating the relationship between WOCA, Oranga Tamariki and ACC.

Accident Compensation Corporation

20. ACC is a Crown entity and also joined the cross-agency initiative of Ngā Tini Whetū in 2020. ACC had an existing relationship and memorandum of understanding with Te Whānau O Waipareira, and more recently a contract for services with WOCA to deliver ACC navigation service. This contract is no longer held by WOCA. The nature of the relationship was for the most part transactional.
21. In early 2020, a meeting between the WOCA and ACC Chief Executives helped 'reset the relationship'. As a result, the Chief Customer Officer took responsibility on behalf of the ACC executive to drive the relationship forward and work with WOCA to look at how ACC could do things differently, particularly when it came to intervening in a more intensive way with whānau, with a focus towards reducing injury and harm.

How Ngā Tini Whetū evolved

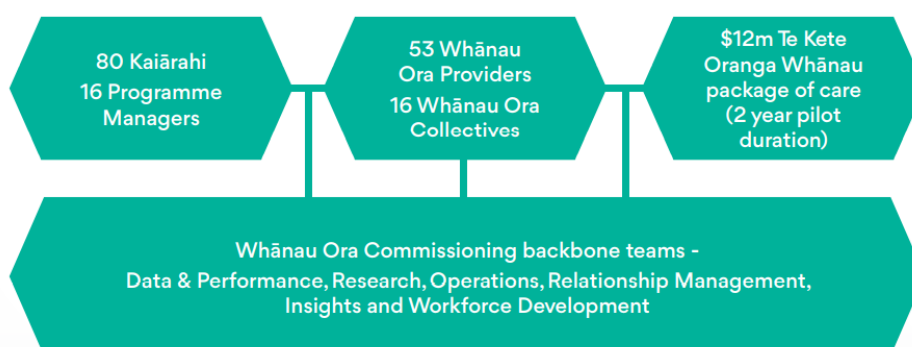
22. In November 2019, the former Minister for Children instigated discussions with the former Associate Minister for Māori Development and ACC and Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust as a result of several contentious cases of how tamariki were being managed by Oranga Tamariki.
23. The Minister for Children engaged DPMC to help build the relationship between Oranga Tamariki and WOCA and explore how the two agencies might collaborate to support whānau in the early intervention and prevention space. Led by DPMC, both agencies engaged in a co-design process to shape up what the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype might look like and developed the business case to secure funding. The co-design process was impacted by COVID-19 and the national lockdown. As a result, the number of planned co-design hui were significantly reduced. The key difference between the 2017 pilot and this prototype was the partnership with Oranga Tamariki, and subsequently Te Puni Kōkiri and ACC.
24. In May/June 2020, the Ngā Tini Whetū governance and leadership groups were established. The governance group comprises the senior leaders responsible from TPK, Oranga Tamariki and ACC. In October 2020, the Chief Operating Officer from WOCA joined the group. A leadership group comprises representatives from each of the three agencies and is responsible for managing the partnership between agencies and delivering the prototype.
25. In December 2020, Te Puni Kōkiri commissioned WOCA to deliver Ngā Tini Whetū on behalf of the two government agencies and Crown entity. WOCA aimed to have the programme up and running across the six Whānau Ora regions of Te Ika-a-Māui (Te Tai Tokerau, Tāmaki Makaurau, Waikato, Te Arawa, Ikaroa Rāwhiti, Te Tai Hauāuru) during the 2020/21 year in three phases: socialisation, design and recruitment; whānau on-boarding, assessment and planning; and supporting whānau.
26. Ngā Tini Whetū is being delivered by 53 Whānau Ora service partners, across six regions of Te Ika a Maui. The first year of funding was allocated for establishment and training. Kaiārahi and Programme Manager recruitment started in December 2020 through to February 2021. Workforce development was delivered from March 2021. In the context of COVID-19 and the frontline responsibilities of Whānau Ora agencies, the prototype rollout was delayed by three months, with phase three - support to whānau - underway from 1 July 2021.

Overview of Ngā Tini Whetū prototype

27. Ngā Tini Whetū reflects a shift towards developing new ways of working and allocating resources so that whānau Māori – who could be at risk of negative outcomes – are given early support to provide their own solutions. The aim of the prototype was to trial how agencies' long-term objectives could be achieved through the combination of whānau-centred approaches and early support to build capability and resilience in families.
28. Participating agencies agreed a number of long-term objectives which they hope Ngā Tini Whetū will contribute progress towards. These include:⁵
- To increase the number of vulnerable whānau that are cohesive, resilient, and nurturing.
 - To address the circumstances that lead to concerns about tamariki wellbeing being reported to Oranga Tamariki, reduce the number of tamariki and rangatahi needing a response from care and protection or youth justice, and/or ways the care and protection system or youth justice responses could be improved.
 - To improve injury and harm prevention, as well as access to ACC services, experience and outcomes for whānau Māori.
 - To consider how an interagency, coordinated and whānau-centred approach applied early in life strengthens whānau in the care of their tamariki/mokopuna, and the extent to which it contributes to Whānau Ora outcomes, and government measures (of wellbeing such as the reduction in the number of tamariki who may otherwise progress to statutory care).

Prototype design

29. In 2018/19 and 2019/20, WOCA hosted the participating agencies and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to co-design the programme.
30. Ngā Tini Whetū is being delivered to 800 whānau across Te Ika-a-Maui with inputs as illustrated by WOCA's diagram below, and as overseen by seven regional coordinators.⁶



⁵ Oranga Tamariki (22.12.20). *Request for proposals: Evaluation of the Ngā Tini Whetū Prototype*, pp 7-8. Refer Appendix One for explanatory detail to these objectives.

⁶ Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (2021). *Ngā Tini Whetū Report One, Quarter Four, 1 April-30 June 2020/21*, p.30.

31. The primary role of the Programme Managers is to strengthen relationships with ACC and Oranga Tamariki at the local level and work through a local level co-design process to look at how to deliver Ngā Tini Whetū in a cohesive and effective way.⁷
32. The main components of the Ngā Tini Whetū model are:
- Local kaiārahi are recruited to work with up to 10 whānau each to support whānau to identify and plan how to achieve their own aspirations, helping to identify and address any challenges along the way
 - Kaiārahi coordinate and navigate whānau members to appropriate services either within the provider’s current ambit or from external service providers as appropriate
 - Kaiārahi draw on flexible funding (Te Kete Oranga) to meet immediate whānau needs or for the direct purchase of additional services for each whānau
 - delivery is supported with project management and data capable resources in each provider within this prototype that is connected to the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency network.⁸
33. Te Kete Oranga was conceived by WOCA as “an enabler of change defined by whānau”. A funding rate of \$15,000 per whānau was calculated with Whānau Ora partners having the autonomy to make funding decisions in a flexible way that enables whānau to pursue and achieve their planned goals.⁹ Te Kete Oranga can be allocated either as direct investment for whānau or as shared investment, for example where there may be shared costs across Ngā Tini Whetū for a joint learning experience or specialist.

Implementation

34. In the first stage, WOCA socialised Ngā Tini Whetū across the six Whānau Ora regions with Whānau Ora partners (16 partnerships which includes 55 partners). The partners then recruited and inducted the 80 kaiārahi and programme managers across the Whānau Ora regions. WOCA worked with partners to develop a collaborative communications plan and programme managers worked with their respective teams and, with the support of WOCA, to develop action plans for the establishment of their respective Ngā Tini Whetū project.
35. In the second stage, partners identified their target cohort, confirmed their whānau assessment tools and individualised plans to manage Kete Oranga funds. They then began recruiting whānau to the prototype with the potential of working with local Oranga Tamariki and ACC offices where needed. Once on board, kaiārahi began assessing and planning with whānau and developing progress measures.
36. In the third stage, kaiārahi were working with whānau to identify their aspirations and, in terms of reporting requirements, begin measuring progress of whānau against their plans.

⁷ Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (2021). *Ngā Tini Whetū Report One, Quarter Four, 1 April-30 June 2020/21*, p.44.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (2021). *Ngā Tini Whetū Report One, Quarter Four, 1 April-30 June 2020/21*, p.42.

High-level findings

37. The key question for this evaluation is:

To what extent is Ngā Tini Whetū enabling whānau potential and what conditions, settings and practices can support an effective interagency initiative?

38. Our team interviewed a cohort of participating whānau (including a small number we revisited post-completion) and over a quarter of all kaiārahi who could speak to the experience of around 200 whānau on Ngā Tini Whetū. Overwhelmingly, the programme was considered transformational for whānau both in practical steps taken during the year and changes in mindset, outlook and overall resilience.

39. In terms of whānau experience and outcomes, consistent themes included:

- Whānau experience of Ngā Tini Whetū was overwhelmingly positive, and many found it life-changing due to the impact it had on many elements of their lives
- Key aspects that supported success were the personal, sustained guidance from the kaiārahi, a focus on whānau strengths and aspirations, supported planning and access to services, and Te Kete Oranga
- Intentional and supported dreaming and planning for the future set whānau up well and helped avoid what could be costly alternative routes
- Positive benefits for tamariki and the whole whānau were seen when barriers like debt and addiction were addressed in the house, leading to reduced family stress and hopefulness
- Greater resilience was evident among whānau because they had gained (self) agency, learned new skills and where to get other forms of help if needed, as well as the confidence to access them.
- Many whānau strengthened their cultural connection to te ao Māori and were learning te reo Māori – building more protective factors for the future for adults and their tamariki
- Some evidence of increased social and community connections via whānau workshops and other kaiārahi-led activities.

40. During the evaluation, we found that whānau needed certain things at different stages.

- Initial scepticism had to be overcome in order for them to join the programme, based on mistrust of government programmes and low expectations of effective public service support
- Whānau needed to be in a state of readiness to acknowledge and action moemoeā
- Kaiārahi had to invest time in whakawhanaungatanga and manaaki – at the pace and on the terms set by whānau. Once trusted, everything was possible.
- Barriers to dreaming needed to be identified and addressed
- Te Kete Oranga was critical to actualising aspirations but dependent on planning and essential skill-development (e.g., budgeting) first
- A level of resilience helped participating whānau cope with change (kaiārahi turnover, COVID-19).

41. In terms of the specific Ngā Tini Whetū approach and its settings, we found:
- A Kaupapa Māori approach is trusted by whānau Māori, enabling recruitment and commitment to Ngā Tini Whetū which led to positive outcomes
 - Delivery by local Whānau Ora partners contributed to how well whānau were engaged and connected them to other services they needed
 - Not having mainstream services lead this programme out was advantageous to build trust, but there were benefits to their involvement (aside from funding) for whānau
 - The personal care and experience of kaiārahi are the most critical component of Ngā Tini Whetū for supporting whānau outcomes
 - A challenge for a few partners and kaiārahi was changing practice to support whānau aspirations rather than crisis response
 - The 1:10 kaiārahi to whānau ratio and the amount of Te Kete Oranga pūtea are considered as set at the right levels
 - A one-year duration worked well for some but there is a case for flexibility.
42. Findings related to how the Ngā Tini Whetū approach fits within the broader government system include:
- This unique inter-agency collaboration worked well for whānau because agencies maintained distance from implementation
 - Whānau Ora is an effective delivery model for whānau Māori, as tested since 2014, and there are robust systems in place to provide assurance
 - Agencies are constrained by the system's individualised portfolios and focus on risk which challenge working in a holistic, whānau-centred way (towards achieving Whānau Ora outcomes)
 - High public service turnover can impede consistency of support for innovative approaches like Ngā Tini Whetū
 - Regional agency offices lacked awareness of Ngā Tini Whetū which could have been an opportunity for developing local inter-agency relationships, cultural capability building (through working with kaiārahi and partners) as well as easing service access for whānau.
43. In addition to the key evaluation question, a series of questions were provided by the agencies as part of the commissioning process. They were refined in collaboration with the agencies down to 14 sub-questions during planning for the evaluation. High-level findings against each of these are provided in the appendices, supported by the detailed findings provided over the following pages.

Detailed findings and whānau voice

Tuatahi: Whānau pathways and outcomes

In this section, findings fall into the following themes:

- Whānau experience of Ngā Tini Whetū was overwhelmingly positive, and many found it life-changing due to the impact it had on so many elements of their lives
- Key aspects that supported success were the personal, sustained guidance from the kaiārahi, a focus on whānau strengths and aspirations, supported planning and access to services, and Te Kete Oranga
- Intentional and supported dreaming and planning for the future set whānau up well and helped avoid what could be costly alternative routes
- Positive benefits for tamariki and the whole whānau were seen when barriers like debt and addiction were addressed in the house, leading to reduced family stress and hopefulness
- Greater resilience was evident among whānau because they had gained (self) agency, learned new skills and where to get other forms of help if needed, as well as the confidence to access them.
- Many whānau strengthened their cultural connection to te ao Māori and were learning te reo Māori – building more protective factors for the future for adults and their tamariki
- Evidence of increased social and community connections via whānau workshops and other kaiārahi-led activities.

Whānau experience of Ngā Tini Whetū was overwhelmingly positive

1. Participating whānau were overwhelmingly positive about their experience of Ngā Tini Whetū. Their reasons related to the intensive whānau-centred, kanohi ki te kanohi support from their kaiārahi, being able to relate to their Māori kaiārahi, the focus on their needs, strengths and aspirations, and the flexibility and practical application of the Te Kete Oranga resource.
2. Whānau valued that the approach was about the needs and aspirations of the whole whānau, rather than addressing a single person or issue. In most cases, kaiārahi came to the whare to work with whānau (where that was the preference) which helped create a sense of comfort and familiarity in a process that was new. Kaiārahi made time for whakawhanaungatanga which helped build manaakitanga or trust.

What I loved about the programme isn't ... just personally around me it was based around the whole whānau and how we could make it work together. The support was there not just for myself but for the whole whānau as well. ... just having people come in and speak to the whole whānau I think is great. (Whānau)

[Kaiārahi] is such an easy-going guy, he's approachable and genuine. He's the perfect guy for this mahi. He's great, he's positive and friendly and made things seem easy, and we'd always meet over coffee and cake, and it was just really informal and relaxing. (Whānau)

Ngā Tini Whetū was life-changing for some – meaning better outcomes for whānau and their communities

3. All whānau spoke about the positive shifts from their lives pre-Ngā Tini Whetū to now, with many considering the experience life-changing, they spoke of their gratitude for this opportunity and the impact it has had on their lives.

The change in my life has been huge. (Whānau)

I really thought it was a privilege, it is, I could not imagine at all as a mummy to six children, I still struggle on the weekly so I can't imagine how I would have got ... [funds to support goals]. This was huge for me. (Whānau)

It helps you grow like a better lifestyle for you and your whanau, emotionally and mentally in every way. It gives you that helping hand.... I've separated from my ex – I don't think I would've been strong without their support. And it's been awesome. ...I can't even say what I would've done. (Whānau)

4. Beyond the critical role of the kaiārahi, the connectedness of the provider organisation and their access to other social services was essential. In some cases, those connections were how whānau came to be introduced to Ngā Tini Whetū.

We have three kids, our oldest is turning 5 in September...the first couple of years for our oldest, there was a lot more of my friends, we were in denial and making the wrong choices. It was only when she turned two when we would've started having more call outs about domestic arguing, spilling out onto the street, passer byers getting worried, it was a really bad scene. I'm very relieved that I noticed that wasn't me in the mirror, I just needed some direction, I started at [service provider] and I was going to a pāpā course, men's group. The group was awesome to get all of the info I was lacking, I thought I knew the information, but they were giving me tools to keep applying – that was mean! That was the first point that I knew I was on the wrong road, dealing with it all and how far I've come, there's no chance I'd stoop that low again. (Whānau)

5. In many cases, to advance whānau towards flourishing, they needed to be connected to additional support services to address challenges and barriers in their lives as part of the Ngā Tini Whetū journey.

I didn't like going out in big crowds, people being behind me, I was isolating myself. I didn't like crowds, when I went to the drivers' licence course, I had to be around lots of people... I didn't know anything about ACC, and I didn't know I was entitled to something. I accessed counselling and support as a result...my friends and whanau. They have never seen me so happy before, they say I've got a bit of a glow now, I'm opening up to the whānau now. (Whānau)

6. Whānau who participated in Ngā Tini Whetū said they had recommended the programme to others and wished many friends and whānau could access it. Most did not have to describe the benefits of the programme because the changes in their lives were so obvious to those around them.

People can see the changes that we've made, for sure. (Whānau)

It's an extremely rewarding and sometimes, if you do it properly, life changing programme that can pretty much set your life in a different kind of – how do I explain it – set your life down a different path (Whānau)

7. Some whānau mentioned knowing people with great ideas that just needed some mentoring and pūtea to activate their dreams too, but there usually is not anything like that. The flexibility and personal approach of this programme was seen as holding huge potential to transform

people's lives and to help correct the inequity experienced by Māori in the westernized public system.

A Kaupapa Māori, strengths-based approach engenders strength

8. The holistic, whānau-centred and navigational approach to working is what has been central to strengthening protective factors and resilience among Ngā Tini Whetū whānau. Whānau felt comfortable and not judged which helped foster good engagement and feelings of hopefulness.

[Kaiārahi] and the team ... They're real positive, they're straight up. They don't judge. ... You know [partner organisation], it's Māori, you feel safe, people's faces are friendly. OT office is real different. ... that whole office, you don't wanna walk in, I suppose without even saying it people make you feel judged. Just a different vibe, not Māori, not welcoming. (Whānau)

9. Kaiārahi Māori turned up to houses, invested time in whakawhanaungatanga, built trust, showed interest and compassion, were able to elicit needs, barriers and hopes. These were the ways that worked well for whānau and enabled them to build their own confidence, motivation and sense of optimism. Whānau protective and resilience factors were strengthened because they were happier, less stressed, and more hopeful about the future.

Really hard because with Covid a lot of whanau can't get together and for me personally once we were doing hui, that was awesome. I was so uncomfortable, and it was painful but at the end it was sooo good for me, it helped build my confidence. So good to meet other mums. I loved that. Ways to build whanaungatanga but really what they do is amazing. And we had to speak, and I was freaking out! I was like, you didn't say we had to talk, that was a big thing for me to speak. (Whānau)

10. Sometimes the barriers were too tough, and movement towards achieving moemoeā stalled while immediate needs were addressed. Kaiārahi support whānau by listening, connecting whānau to other services, using Te Kete Oranga to meet immediate needs or just being a person to talk to and work through difficulties. Some whānau noted how comfortable they felt and that there was never a sense of judgement about their situations from their kaiārahi – just, 'what do you need in order to dream?'

It's a whole support system. Māori culture, you feel comfortable, they work like a whānau. I've taken a few of my whānau to get some help. They love it too. The drinking and the drug addiction in our whānau needs to be spoken about and needs to end. It's intergenerational and its damaging. (Whānau)

I would not have got this far without Ngā Tini Whetū. The whole kaupapa was amazing and enabled people like me, young Maori families to be able to create this opportunity for their tamariki to live on their whenua. Without the support, not just financial, the whole tautoko system that came with it, Rongoā, hiko and upskilling in different areas, create plans really mattered to me. (Whānau)

11. Most whānau spoke about the frequency and regularity of contact by their kaiārahi. This appeared to contribute to their own building of discipline and self-belief because someone (outside of their whānau) believed and encouraged them to achieve small goals as part of the bigger plan.

[Kaiārahi name] been following me step by step just helping me keep to, because we had timeframes that we wanted to complete things by, and I would report back to her monthly about how I found everything and you know how much more support could I use. If she needed to bring in outside support for me and things like that but it just, it seemed too easy to be able work with her and the support was awesome. (Whānau)

12. Building confidence in one area often led to growth in other areas of life. One very isolated māmā had been dependent on drugs and alcohol, which she knew meant she was not there for her young tamariki, but through Ngā Tini Whetū she had built confidence and strength to seek help for her addictions.

I work with [name] for my alcohol and drugs. I self-referred to her. When I really need her, she will be there for me...I need to learn the skills and self-control within myself...I find it hard though when I'm not drinking cause I get bored. To keep myself busy...once my youngest baby is in kōhanga – I can start working on my training. I keep needing to focus on the positives, it's still a struggle, I don't have many friends to talk with that's good supportive. A lot of people in this town are tainted with drugs and alcohol, you're kind of lonely all of the time. (Whānau)

Positive impacts on tamariki and whānau once parent/caregivers are supported

13. There was evidence of tamariki being positively impacted by steps taken with Ngā Tini Whetū. Whānau and kaiārahi spoke about increased family happiness and cohesiveness once barriers like debt and addiction were addressed. Reductions in stress and conflict and increased physical activity and steps taken to improve health and safety contributed to overall whānau wellbeing. There were some examples of whānau having tamariki returned to them from Oranga Tamariki as a result of the support received through Ngā Tini Whetū.

Saving and enjoy life with the kids. We don't go out a lot because I'm always paying for bills. Saving \$20 a week so we can do stuff in the holidays. I want to concentrate on living life...I really, I'm grateful to be in the programme, like honestly, things could've been so much worse, my situation has improved as well. It's crazy how much it helped me. It's not over, I can see there is light. (Whānau)

14. Many parents spoke about being able to be more present for their tamariki once they had had immediate stress and pressures removed. This lifting of pressure led to improved mental health, clarity and a greater sense of purpose and direction, which meant that they had more capacity to prioritise their children and their needs. This in turn, resulted in better overall whānau health and enabled them to spend more time together as a whānau. Whānau that achieved their goals noted ripple effects on others around them, they felt proud and wanted to support other whānau members to achieve their goals.

Knowing that I can support my whānau, that definitely lifts a massive load so it takes a toll off my mental health a little bit because I know that I can provide for them even though that their dad's not here. I can still do it for them, it's been amazing in that sense. They're the main reason why I got into this so that I could work my hours around my children and still be able to be there and be a supportive mama as well. (Whānau)

Business stuff aside...just be a little bit more present for my children because I've been studying for the last year and a half. ...We've got goals to live a little bit healthier. I mean we're pretty good now but just to be able to go out and do more things as a whānau too. (Whānau)

It's pretty cool for them [our tamariki] to see that evolve for our whānau and we like, you know they've got their own dreams and aspirations and we'd love for them to be involved in some way shape or form. (Whānau)

Te Kete Oranga removed barriers and/or enabled dreaming to start taking effect

15. With challenges identified and a plan in place to work towards achieving goals, Te Kete Oranga was used to problem solve, create a more stable baseline for the whānau to work from or invested in aspirations. For a few whānau, debts prevented them from making any

headway and caused significant stress in the household, so paying off debt and consolidating debt was a priority.

I think that's absolutely underestimated what debt does to people and how debt also then cycles through generations... I think it's still just quite soul destroying because people feel like they can't take any steps forward because they're so consumed then they recycle the debt to another, a loan shark or then they get another loan. So, it just goes up. ...I think it's one of the most demoralising things that whānau experience...And what [partner organisation] did do was force whānau to recognise that they needed strategies to engage or look at their resources that they have access to. So here it was all about budgeting, what was our plan for going ahead. (Programme Manager)

I don't have a lot of local support. I've been on my own for a long time. My kids are aged 11, 9, 8, 4. It's been awesome because my mind is clearer now, the stress of paying bills was taken away, it settled them because I am more settled. (Whānau)

16. The holistic, strengths-based way that Kaiārahi worked to support whānau aspirations combined with being able to provide funding to support the realisation of whānau aspirations, meant a wide spectrum of goals and aspirations were supported. Some of the ways the Kete was applied, that we learned about, included:

- Equipment and vehicles for self-employment, a new business
- Workshops for whānau covering financial literacy, business planning
- Debt clearance
- Fee payments towards higher education
- Furniture
- Sport and recreation lessons or fees
- Water tank for rural location
- House modifications to support a physical disability.

17. One whānau with six children was supported by their kaiārahi to move out of emergency accommodation on to their own whenua. The kaiārahi and whānau worked with a range of agencies to make the much-wanted aim of living on their own land – and out of a cramped motel - a reality. The Ministry of Social Development and Te Puni Kōkiri had roles in helping the whānau relocate and then Te Kete Oranga was used to help create an access to their new whare.

Whānau reconnected with their Māori culture through Ngā Tini Whetū

18. The influence of kaiārahi Māori who asked whānau about whakapapa, perhaps used te reo Māori or shared parts of their own cultural story with whānau – inspired their desire for greater cultural connection. At least one cohort was based on marae which had a profound effect on some whānau, sparking a new journey to connect with their Māori culture.

I think ..being able to work for myself in that (medical) field, being Māori and being able to use my tikanga ... to put some methodologies within my mahi and being able to put myself out there as that person. (Whānau)

19. Others spoke about connecting or re-connecting with Māori culture as an unexpected benefit and outcome of their engagement with Ngā Tini Whetū.

During this journey ... really inspired us to learn our reo again you know...through the whole experience he's really driven it in terms of wanting people to see that. (Whānau)

20. The desire to learn te reo Māori as a goal during Ngā Tini Whetū led to learnings about New Zealand history, tikanga and their own whakapapa, and further enriched their experience.

We genuinely are appreciative of being given this opportunity and we know that, and we can't recommend it enough, I couldn't speak more highly of [Kaiārahi]. The marae, the feeling of being welcomed onto the marae when like I've never been in my life, that was incredibly special. Being told that you know that marae is your marae should you feel like you need it and we've been there so many times now and we really do appreciate that. (Whānau)

It was really good because I did the te reo course through [Kaiārahi] through the marae so just got a level one this week and I just, I learned so much through that. (Whānau)

Whānau felt more hopeful and future-focused, encouraged to think bigger

21. The process of working kanohi ki te kanohi with kaiārahi meant some whānau could deeply consider what they wanted in their lives. Sometimes this brought up new goals that they didn't expect or took them in unexpected directions. For some, taking the time to really consider both moemoeā and the skills and interests they had to draw on, meant they avoided potentially costly mistakes. One whānau had a good idea that they were focused on but worked through this with their kaiārahi and decided that was not a good fit but found something else that was ideal for them as a whānau. This couple had not finished school, were engaged with the Police for domestic incidents, and had several children. Since Ngā Tini Whetū, they completed a course related to their business idea, gained NCEA credits, set up an office, created promotional materials and started a business.

Since we met [Kaiārahi name], our lives have purpose. When I got put into [service provider] it was because of the Police. I just realised I was on a different road, [Kaiārahi name] showed me, working out better for me and the whānau. We owe a lot ...the improvements we've made in the small time we've had with [Kaiārahi name] is incredible. (Whānau)

22. For whānau who were in more challenging circumstances before Ngā Tini Whetū (e.g., Regularly involved in domestic violence, addiction, isolated by health condition) they felt there had been a 180-degree shift in their outlook. They were more optimistic and hopeful about their future, felt better in themselves and were looking forward.

I got my licence, I grow my own vegetables, this is a result of Ngā Tini Whetū and meeting other mothers with the same goals. I want more, I want more for me and my kids. (Whānau)

My goals are to get a job to do what [name] does, rongoā, I've always wanted to do that. I'm kind of stuck, I never thought I could have a choice. But now I do. I want to work with [organisation name] and to help whānau. And with Māori medicines and healing to support trauma. (Whānau)

23. Other whānau who were in more stable positions before Ngā Tini Whetū felt galvanised by the process and support they received to actively pursue their moemoeā. One husband and wife took the time during lockdown to think about the future for them and their tamariki but also their community and the health challenges of Māori generally. With the support of their kaiārahi and business-focused cohort they established a health and fitness enterprise. Their

children were involved in the process, learning practical things as well as having their parents role model setting up a business and managing the various challenges.

[Ngā Tini Whetū] has been huge, for me and my wife. We've actually sat down and talked about what the future looks like ... we have an accountant and a business advisor, and we have a meeting with her – business coach [funded through Ngā Tini Whetū] and that's what we really wanted. Me and my wife can plan and then you know make it happen. (Whānau)

Ngā Tini Whetū has really set us up to advance forward together. (Whānau)

Whānau are achieving the goals they set for themselves, and have increased their own agency

24. All whānau we spoke with were achieving steps in their plans or had already achieved a larger goal and were thinking about the next. They had gained insights to themselves and skills along the way including making plans and identifying challenges and solutions. Whānau felt more informed about what they needed to achieve their aspirations and how and where to access resources. This increased agency and feeling like they had control over their lives was a powerful outcome for many whānau.

I've just had people after people trying to get me to go and work for them... there's so many options since I've achieved all my goals with [Kaiārahi]. (Whānau)

I'd recommend to friends and whanau, it's amazing. When [kaiārahi] first told me, I didn't believe it. It just sounded too good to be true, and it actually it is. Just a little bit of extra help to get you going and all of the courses they offer, so I went to all of them, there was a branding course, shopify course, tax, small business, personal coaching. [Whānau]

I probably would have gone and worked in someone else's business. It's been life changing like I already knew when I started beauty therapy that I wanted to open my own business, I just didn't have the financial means to be able to do it. (Whānau)

It was to create that financial independence for ourselves, and it was a journey that we wanted to be on together and we set out by really looking at what we wanted to do and not necessarily how much money we wanted to make. (Whānau)

Group work built social connections and worked well especially for those wanting to be self-employed

25. Making connections with other people on a similar journey empowered some whānau on Ngā Tini Whetū. They shared experiences, felt less isolated and exchanged ideas and advice to help each other. These connections helped build protective factors by growing the wider social network, a potential source of support (giving and receiving) into the future.

[Kaiārahi name] was keeping in constant contact with me via email and phone and sometimes we'd meet up with some of the other girls who were following their goals and their journeys as well, just to try and make it you know to show them that there is more support out there for people like us who are aspiring to start our own businesses and things like that. (Whānau)

Meeting people with different aspirations and goals and supporting each other through it. I've learnt a lot from my cohort and not realising where they've come from. We were brought together in a positive way. (Whānau)

Right from day one just making, made to feel welcome and when you're made to feel welcome in a place or space you don't want to stop going back to that place to draw from it to you know for accountability, for continuous support. (Whānau)

We have such a great cohort, and we have people that have been in business, you know working for people to help them with their businesses and stuff and so we had lots of experience around the table as well. (Whānau)

Tuarua: What whānau need at different stages

During the evaluation, we found that whānau needed certain things at different stages.

- Initial scepticism had to be overcome in order for them to join the programme, based on mistrust of government programmes and low expectations of effective public service support
- Whānau needed to be in a state of readiness to acknowledge and action their moemoeā
- Kaiārahi had to invest time in whakawhanaungatanga and manaaki – at the pace and on the terms set by whānau. Once trusted, everything was possible.
- Barriers to dreaming needed to be identified and addressed
- Te Kete Oranga was critical to actualising aspirations but dependent on planning and any essential skill-development first
- A level of resilience helped participating whānau cope with change (kaiārahi turnover, COVID-19).

Kaiārahi needed to invest time upfront to build trust/support planning and then be nearby

26. As a new model there was some scepticism about ‘another programme’ and a lot of unknowns about what it would entail. Being led out by Whānau Ora partners helped convince whānau to join Ngā Tini Whetū, many of whom distrusted or had poor experience with mainstream agencies.
27. It took time (several months) for kaiārahi to whakawhanaunga with whānau and build trusted relationships. This happened at a time and place of whānau choosing, often in their whare over kai, gently getting to know all the members of the family. With trust built, whānau would then share very personal information about existing challenges and kaiārahi would encourage them to look beyond these to their dreams.
28. With aspirations identified, kaiārahi worked through a pathway plan or similar with whānau to work out how they would get from their current state to achieve their goals. Typically, mini goals would be identified together so that the larger objective did not seem so far from reach, and they could start experiencing small achievements quickly. This approach in itself gave new whānau new skills, many of whom were not used to planning things out, contributing a resilience factor for their future.
29. As the relationship strengthened over time, whānau trusted in the kaiārahi support and availability and became more independent in achieving their plan. Kaiārahi were very clear that they were there to support whānau success rather than doing anything to support them. It is a testament to the kaiārahi that most appeared to maintain contact with whānau beyond contract completion. This is unusual in traditional procurement but is a strength of an outcomes and whānau-centred approach. This follow-through, where needed, can be the difference in achieving sustained outcomes.

State of readiness informs what whānau need and their outlook at the start of Ngā Tini Whetū

30. Many whānau interviewed were receiving benefits and needed support with basic needs initially, before being in a space where they could think about and articulate their hopes and dreams and future plans. For whānau, it was essential that kaiārahi helped build the resources and resilience of the parent or parents first in order to benefit tamariki.

Not being on drugs and alcohol has helped me so much. I have dreams now, ... I'm accessing services to help me reconnect with people. Before I had social anxiety as a result of the drugs and alcohol. I was just stuck and not very hopeful. She's helped me in so many ways to help me believe in myself cause I really didn't have any of that. Communication with my children - that has improved so much. I am learning te reo to support my kids cause all of their work is in te reo. ... I'm ready to learn. (Whānau)

31. Most whānau felt their participation with Ngā Tini Whetū happened at the right time for them. The 'right timing' was mentioned by kaiārahi and whānau during interviews: for whānau who participated they were in a position to agree to this new and unknown opportunity which took courage. For kaiārahi, who held greater knowledge about the programme, they understood the level of engagement and commitment that would be required, and this generally helped inform who was approached to participate. In a small number of cases, whānau withdrew during the programme because they were not ready.

it's an opportunity to better yourself, it's an opportunity to grow...to advance your dream and go with it I suppose.... You have to be ready to put in the work too... Because it's not something, it isn't a handout... They're not going to do it for you. (Whānau)

When [Kaiārahi] initially visited me to explain what Ngā Tini Whetū is and what it meant, I thought I fitted perfectly in terms of trying to be independent and have a self-sustainable life for my tamariki, on their whenua at home. They came around at the time I was in emergency accommodation in town. (Whānau)

Whakawhanaungatanga and listening were important first steps

32. At the point whānau were engaged on the programme, they needed someone independent and compassionate to listen to their needs and help draw out their aspirations. Once they had built trust, worked with the kaiārahi and a plan was in place they then needed that person to be nearby to help hold them to account or be an advocate to achieve mini goals.

it's a difficult one because you don't know where you'd be without support and a lot of the, some of the best support we got wasn't financial it was morale, it was that boost that knowing that...it was just knowing that people like people believed in you. Like just seeing the way that other people thought, what people thought you were capable of, the encouragement, I guess. (Whānau)

33. Financial aid was secondary to this personal support but was very important in helping to remove barriers that were in the way of any possible movement forward.

Although I wanted to do something that I loved ... it always comes at a cost, and I think I probably would not have been able to really afford that had Ngā Tini Whetū not been an option for me. And I think that's what sets a lot of people back when they're trying to achieve goals like this, like putting in place something and then you hit a brick wall and most of the time it is because of money and then not just stopped us from being able to achieve the goals that we really wanted, and so that was the biggest help that I found with Ngā Tini Whetū definitely. (Whānau)

34. Many whānau experienced risk factors but were just a step away from advancing their goals and gaining independence. Some already had clarity about what they wanted to do and were studying towards a qualification, but the ability to vision to completion was not there. A solo mother was training towards becoming a beautician and assumed she would try and get a job working for someone when she completed. Through Ngā Tini Whetū she confirmed her goals around beauty but also that she wanted to be available to her young children which led to a plan around setting up her own business from home. Another wahine was on a degree track in a much-needed medical field but was at-risk of non-completion because of practicum-related costs.

We are pretty determined people, I think we would have been on this journey, but I don't think we would be where we are now...I think it would have been, I think potentially might have been a little bit more debt, having to have found other options I guess to help us through I guess. (Whānau)

35. In both of these cases, and others, whānau were motivated and on a good track to independence but support and a small amount of funding ensured they would get there rather than potentially withdraw. There were also further advantages such as gaining new knowledge through starting a business, positive role modelling to children, and pursuing one's goals.

I accessed small business courses; this was the stuff we really needed. We had the practical skills but didn't know how to run a business, taxes and GST, the courses helped us out a lot and slowly learning about the business side of things. All of that, resources, I got me an accountant. I've started a business. ...Ngā Tini Whetū helped us with all of that, chisels, tools. I'm just so grateful, the business side, some tools and stuff, to help me with the project, a trailer to help move my wood. Without this, I would have carried on probably, somehow or some form, I wasn't gonna give up, I wasn't gonna give up ... We couldn't let it overwhelm us. (Whānau)

Kaiārahi were relatable, became trusted friends and advisors to whānau

36. Quite a few of the participating whānau comprised of an adult or adults and several tamariki. Depending on the age or ability of children to engage in the process, often the kaiārahi would focus first on the adult or couple and what they wanted and needed for the whānau. The process varied across kaiārahi but often involved identifying immediate challenges, mind mapping about aspirations and then identifying short-term, achievable goals to help build towards bigger dreams.

[Kaiārahi name] came to me to my whare and we met up and made a bit of a plan around how it would look, how I wanted to achieve my goals. We did a bit of a mind map and wrote down all my goals, how I planned to achieve them step by step and what I eventually wanted to achieve as the end goal and how I was going to do it. So, we did all that and then that gave us a plan to be able to work ...and achieving things just using the step-by-step things that we wrote down in the mind map. (Whānau)

37. Many whānau mentioned having built friendships with their kaiārahi, and the qualities included being genuine, caring and compassionate. Respecting and trusting their kaiārahi was important to whānau in order to feel comfortable to open up and share what they needed and wanted in order to move forward. Some had previously negative experiences dealing with public service providers and had very low expectations. Being Māori with local knowledge, or for some even whanaunga, was essential to get whānau to participate and engage.

I usually take a while (to build trust with people), she was really soft and had a genuine approach. You could feel it... I'm not one to go to appointments, and I turned up, I don't usually turn up to these things, but I did this time... now I consider her my friend. (Whānau)

If I'm feeling like I can't handle my emotions, I just ring [Kaiārahi] and then I feel better, and she makes so much time for me. I've not had that before without burdening my mother and siblings. (Whānau)

38. Whānau described their kaiārahi as being supportive, happy for their achievements, and like a good teacher. Whānau valued their reliability and availability, being around when they needed them, even after hours.

You can like literally ask her for help for anything and she is right there. Like I could just message her even in the weekend, I'd be like 'oh sorry, I just need to ask something', and she answered it straightaway even in the weekend. (Whānau)

He's incredibly encouraging. He's the kind of guy you could pick up a phone at any stage or flip a message and you know that he's going to support you. (Whānau)

39. A description of kaiārahi that frequently came up in interviews was that whānau found them relatable. Often this was because kaiārahi were Māori, they shared a language or similar values. Some mentioned asking questions or raising issues and liking that the kaiārahi did not have a solution on the spot but went away to do research and always came back with some advice. They did not have all the answers (which was relatable) and they put care into whānau interests and concerns before returning to work through to a solution.

[Kaiārahi] is an artist and he understands where we are coming from because he's been there before, and it really helps... Understands the business side is important and pointed us in the right direction to the right people and he is relatable and speaks a language we can understand... I've got some mates who are on the same plane like I am, we all need awahi and support and learning, especially in business. (Whānau)

She was really great and wanted to help me, I can't work, and she just went away and came back with advice and support. Helped me set goals, really understanding, she knew where I was, she knew what I wanted to achieve and kept pushing me in the right direction. She was teaching me lots of life skills and understanding. I felt really comfortable with her, the more I spoke with her and let her know what I was going through, she could understand. (Whānau)

40. Whānau also described the role of the kaiārahi as a facilitator and that the process was a supportive one, that they worked with whānau to plan, and problem solve. Whānau led the process, and they were conscious of this and appreciated the ownership.

I thank Ngā Tini Whetū and big ups to [Kaiārahi] because it's taken for her to come into my life to spark motivation, her understanding and openness of her life has made a difference in my world. (Whānau)

He's a great facilitator, a great – what's the word for it - great support person to have in regard to accountability, aroha, manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, all of that and I guess it comes with his te reo background too you know, yep. (Whānau)

41. In a few cases, kaiārahi left their job and so the 'trusted person' for whānau changed. This was challenging and not ideal as building trust and having to re-tell ones' story can be hard for whānau who may be in a vulnerable state. In some instances, the new kaiārahi was good or even better for the whānau, and this came down to the quality of information left by the departing kaiārahi and the ability of the new one to build manaakitanga.

Whānau see mainstream services as Pākehā, and are more comfortable working with Māori

42. There was a prevailing impression from whānau (directly and via kaiārahi) that government agencies are led by Pākehā, are generally biased against Māori, and do not care. The main success of Ngā Tini Whetū was having a kaiārahi (usually Māori) who listened, got to know the whānau and could support their growth journey.

Working with [Kaiārahi name] you work together. Work with the police they tell you what to do. [Kaiārahi name] outlines the positives and negatives. We hardly work on negatives because there's not many anymore. (Whānau)

Non-judgemental and you're not feeling like you're on the backfoot, like you're being investigated like with WINZ and OT. They are making sure everything is tika, but it's different. It feels more comfortable. (Whānau)

The cohort ... had struggled with a number of different agencies over a period of time. And they were all interfacing with the different government organisations but not in a meaningful way. (Programme Manager)

43. Whānau felt comfortable sharing their challenges and goals with kaiārahi Māori. They appreciated transparency, the tikanga based approach and, in contrast to experiences with mainstream services, they did not feel belittled or assessed.

I was involved with Oranga Tamariki a couple of years ago and that was ... the result of a few things that their dad had done, but that pulled them into our home which I wasn't too happy about, but [Kaiārahi] has just been supportive and compassionate the whole way through. ...She's just been compassionate and kind instead of you know with Oranga Tamariki I almost felt like they weren't hearing me properly. So that's been the difference I felt like we were supported by [Kaiārahi] and not just a number and statistic if that makes any sense. (Whānau)

[Kaiārahi] has been our rock for me and my household. Really good eh. If it wasn't for her guidance, aue, wouldn't be where we are at. The other thing with her, she is straight up, she's straight to the point. I hate this WINZ language; they use big words – make you feel little. (Whānau)

I used to lie about things to other services, but I could relax and be open with her [Kaiārahi]. With no fear, and I thank Ngā Tini Whetū for doing this for families. (Whānau)

44. In some cases Kaiārahi represented whānau or negotiated with local government agencies about taking over responsibility for interventions they had in place.

She had fourteen different organisations up her driveway when I first started working with her so we were able to scale that right back to [local Māori provider] and then as the other organisations, specifically Oranga Tamariki, if they wanted to contact her they would go through me and I would organise a meet with mum and OT and she's, yeah she's just amazing. She is my star whānau. (Kaiārahi)

A level of resilience needed to commit to programme and cope with change

45. In a small number of cases, whānau were not quite ready for Ngā Tini Whetū or reportedly became dependent on their kaiārahi or dropped out due to COVID-19 (e.g., unvaccinated) or other reasons. The broad criteria was that whānau should not be in a crisis state although at

least a couple of kaiārahi interviewed felt we are all a step away from crisis and that the approach could work regardless of current state.

My understanding of it was that these were whānau, the selection would be whānau that are ready to take that next step that aren't in crisis. (Kaiārahi)

I think there might have been about two or three whānau who just, oh especially two have lost contact with us on that side of things because of covid. And probably at that time it wasn't a priority for them, you know the priority was getting the whānau supported and well yeah. (Kaiārahi)

These whānau at that time might not have been in crisis and they might have slipped back in...and that happens. I mean we just have to support them to get back on the waka again. But some of them we need to remind them, 'hey, we're here to support you, you know', and that's a lot of phone calls, visits, like how can we support you. We're always here you know. And some of them have only just jumped back on the waka now. (Kaiārahi)

46. Other kaiārahi felt strongly about whānau being in a state of readiness to focus on aspirations and felt the programme's value could be lost or would set the whānau back even further if not able to progress far.
47. The readiness of whānau was critical particularly if there was a change in lead kaiārahi. Whānau needed a level of resilience to cope with this change especially if they had gone through a long process of building trust and sharing personal information and aspirations. In these cases, it was important that kaiārahi had good planning in place, had sensitively documented the journey (ideally endorsed by whānau) and supported a handover. While not ideal to change kaiārahi mid-year, this happened in some cases and was for the most part successful during the prototype due to the ability of new kaiārahi to pick up the journey and express whanaungatanga. Signposting and celebrating short-term or mini goals helped to focus both whānau and their kaiārahi along the way.

Covid was challenging for some

48. The roll out of the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype was delayed due to COVID-19 and affected how and when some providers were able to engage whānau onto the programme. Once engaged, lockdowns also negatively impacted on how some kaiārahi engaged with whānau, especially for Whānau Ora providers in Tāmaki Makaurau and the Waikato who experienced a higher frequency of lockdowns than other regions.

The biggest challenge was the lockdown, obviously in the covid. And that was just because when that did happen because I'm still in mahi at the moment, it actually made me a lot more busy than I usually would be and so I wasn't able to keep to some of the timeframes that we did set. However, the support was still great, we were still able to keep in contact and things like that but it did push a few things back. (Whānau)

Deployment happened and ... they had no tasks for us to do, it was stressful for them and us. During lockdown it was tough for everyone. The rush when we came back to each other and then hey, into it, you need to have this, this and this. I feel like they didn't get have the time or give us the opportunity to get tasks, so they came back rushed and frantic. I totally understand it, but it was tough. If one of them could have stayed with us that would have been great, set little goals, covid homework. (Whānau)

49. In addition, some businesses failed, or organisations were forced to downsize meaning some whānau lost their jobs. A couple of whānau interviewed were skilled artisans made redundant during this time and were then connected to Ngā Tini Whetū. They had skills and motivation to

maintain their artistry but being made redundant had the potential to weigh them down. Their kaiārahi supported them both to stay engaged, keep positive and invested in them becoming self-employed so that they could continue supporting their whānau rather than relying on a benefit.

I can work at any time with the lighting because I only had one little lightbulb before. I feel safe and I can do my mahi, I feel secure. They also purchased tools and canvas and new paints. It's fantastic.
(Whānau)

I thought, don't let the covid stuff overwhelm us, and then we wanted to get into making this carving a business for us. And then got chucked in the deep end. [redundancy].. There was an opportunity and my mate let me know about Ngā Tini Whetū. I wanted to create a business (Whānau)

Tuatoru: The Ngā Tini Whetū approach and its settings

In this section, findings fall into the following themes:

- A Kaupapa Māori approach is trusted by whānau Māori, enabling recruitment and commitment to Ngā Tini Whetū which led to positive outcomes
- Delivery by local Whānau Ora partners contributed to how well whānau were engaged and connected them to other services they needed
- Not having mainstream services lead this programme out was advantageous to build trust, but there were benefits to their involvement (aside from funding) for whānau
- The personal care and experience of kaiārahi are the most critical component of Ngā Tini Whetū for supporting whānau outcomes
- A challenge for a few partners and kaiārahi was changing practice to support aspirations rather than crisis response
- The 1:10 kaiārahi to whānau ratio and the amount of Te Kete Oranga pūtea are considered as set at the right levels
- A one-year duration worked well for some but there is a case for flexibility.

Kaupapa Māori is familiar and trusted

50. A Kaupapa Māori approach means engagement is strengths-based, whānau-centred and ideas and actions are founded in Māori values which include whakawhanaungatanga, manaakitanga and building self-sufficiency towards rangatiratanga.

That's one big thing that you need to build those relationships, that trust and really understand your whānau, where they come from. Also, our values really come into it, it's very values based, you know our manaakitanga looking after our whānau, that's more respect. Rangatiratanga, ensuring that we help build them up, so they are to become independent. So, it's all about our values and how we whakatinana their moemoeā through that. (Kaiārahi)

51. Kaiārahi and partner organisations are motivated to support whānau Māori away from state dependence. Rangatiratanga is the ultimate moemoeā for everyone – being able to live your life as you wish, independently. All kaiārahi spoke about spending time, sometimes months, with whānau to build a pathway plan as the key foundational step to actually achieving it.

Knowing our whānau, good planning and also not allowing them to become dependent on the programmes and the pūtea that we can provide them. It's only a resource to help support them get to where they need to be. (Kaiārahi)

We know that along the way things might change so it's being able to have that flexibility, however keep the big picture in mind and that's about our whānau I think striving for independence (Kaiārahi)

52. Being Māori, speaking the language, knowing the area and sites of significance to Māori all contribute to how whānau relate and feel safe with their kaiārahi, critical to being able to form a plan together. Strengthening connections to whakapapa, reo, tikanga, whenua and overall cultural identity to build confidence and self-esteem has been a key feature in the approaches taken for Ngā Tini Whetū.

Investing in local approaches exemplified manaakitanga

53. Ngā Tini Whetū evolved from the Whānau Ora model which “enables partners and collectives to design and implement tools, systems and processes that work for their whānau and communities”.¹⁰ This approach exemplified trust in local providers and supported what they know works for their people in their rohe. They work in communities with whānau every day and the difference with this programme is that they were resourced to focus on a small target cohort and had access to funding to activate whānau goals and aspirations.

What I understand is that it is about our whānau being able to think big and dream big and for us to help them navigate their way to achieving that goal as well as providing them with not only financially but also education and different pathways to help guide them to get there. I think what's really important from what I've seen is that it takes, you need to know your whānau. (Kaiārahi)

54. Trusted local relationships with other services and providers were considered an important part of this programme's effectiveness. The local knowledge and networks enabled Kaiārahi to make a call for a whānau member to have a health assessment or connect to a business mentor. This meant whānau were able to progress towards goals – which helped build trust and confidence with their kaiārahi as well as build faith in other service providers.

I have only ten whānau with me so being able to spend that quality time with the whānau, also I think it's important that we work together with the other kaimahi that are supporting them so that wraparound support. The housing, other programmes that they maybe, like family violence programmes. All of that understanding situation and support them through pretty much through their journey. So it's that wraparound support also that I find quite different. (Kaiārahi)

Whānau perceptions of mainstream services an initial barrier to engagement

55. It was likely far more effective that Whānau Ora partners recruited and engaged whānau on to Ngā Tini Whetū rather than being led out by a government agency. There was broad mistrust among whānau of government agencies, as shaped by their own poor experiences or those of wider whānau. Many needed to be convinced that this was something different, grounded in tikanga and that it was to support them to lead rather than being done to them.

We're actually looking at whānau who have been subject to systems, subject to intergenerational trauma, so that's our key target area...you only have to look at what's been happening over the last couple of years with the review upon review upon review upon review that we know that whatever's happening in there, in their space isn't working. (Programme Manager)

¹⁰ Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (2021). *Ngā Tini Whetū Report One, Quarter Four, 1 April-30 June 2020/21*, p.8.

56. Having successfully engaged whānau on to the programme, kaiārahi then spent time building trusted relationships.

It took quite a ... few months to get whānau to engage and also to build the whakawhanaungatanga with whānau and work with us and not see you as an OT service. (Kaiārahi)

Even though it was a very difficult cohort to start with, that relationship work was absolutely ... whanaungatanga work and that manaaki from the heart needed to be delivered and they knew that the system didn't care for them. So we were going to have to be pretty exceptional for them to actually allow us in their door. (Programme Manager)

It took at least six months to fully engage or have whānau trusting you know because of other systems they've been involved with they already have those barriers up and were very very reluctant to engage with another service who said they're going to help ... It's not easy pulling pūrākau or their stories from them and having them, allowing them to share it. We've asked their permission and they're open to sharing their kōrero and I feel that that's huge. (Programme Manager)

57. Many kaiārahi had worked for government agencies (including as public sector social workers) before coming to work for a Māori service provider. They know the target-driven approach is ineffective for many whānau Māori.

Kaiārahi support the Ngā Tini Whetū approach for its contrast to mainstream services

An experienced social sector practitioner, now working as Ngā Tini Whetū kaiārahi, described the approach compared to previous government roles:

Like we're going out there with the prescribed ... the forms, the system, the assessments were all about what the services and the audit requirements ... and somewhere in there, there was a whānau, you know that was suffering.

She was now working with three whānau in Ngā Tini Whetū that she knew from previous roles where they had been categorised as "high-risk":

Everything that I did with them under the other system was about reporting back what I've done in terms of compliance, their compliance, everything. So have you got this, have you done this, how many times have you visited them, you know that's what it was about and then we inevitably got to the point - are you ready to be signed off now.

Under Ngā Tini Whetū, she was prioritising whānau that had been engaged with various mainstream services, had had no positive progress and then disappeared from the system because she knew how damaging the experience had been for them.

She was still amazed (as were other kaiārahi) that this prototype was actually happening and she got to work in this better way, recalling her reaction on reading the kaiārahi job description:

I went back to him and said 'that's not for real, eh?'. And he goes, 'what do you mean?'. I said, 'if that's for real then I'm in' because I read something that for the first time actually looked like it was to do with whānau. You know, I don't call them clients or victims, they're whānau. And it was about them and what they needed rather than the years that I've worked the different policies and that's what the focus was.

There was consistent relief and gratitude among kaiārahi that – even if just for a trial period - this approach was being taken because they know a whānau-centred, strengths-based approach works, as shared by another couple of kaiārahi:

In all the years I've worked with people in trouble, with the people in the prisons, the victims I've worked with never have I come across a system that I am able to work like I am now with them. I'm sold. We should not be doing it any other way but through this system.

I come from a social workers background but it's always been deficit. So, ... I actually laughed when I was starting to do some of the training, I laughed because I couldn't believe that I was able to be in a space where ... it was a space of strength, wellness. It was hauora, it was all of that, it was strengths based and whānau got to determine that, they determined what they had, rangatiratanga.

Resourcing and recruitment decisions depended on the cohort focus for Ngā Tini Whetū

58. There was variation across providers in terms of how they positioned the programme and therefore attracted whānau to participate. This approach aligns with WOCA's approach to support the mana motuhake of partners, recognising that they are best placed to know what is needed by their communities and whānau. A few providers prioritised whānau who had some form of engagement with Oranga Tamariki, as they felt that was a critical issue for local whānau. A number had another local issue that decided their focus, including a group affected by methamphetamine use and another cohort of kaumātua and kuia raising mokopuna. A handful focused on supporting whānau with new business ideas or wanting to be self-employed and structured their programme around seminars and business mentoring. Others had no specific focus or participation criteria.
59. The level of resources and support that whānau wanted depended somewhat on that cohort focus or how the provider had interpreted the eligibility criteria for Ngā Tini Whetū. The programme was intended for those where early signs of family risk or harm had been identified but with sufficient stability to be supported towards their aspirations. The majority of participating whānau appeared to have some risk factors including depending on benefits, domestic violence incidents, and a third of those interviewed were sole parenting. A small number of whānau did not appear to have risk factors, being financially independent with few needs and not engaged with any statutory agencies.

Effective for whānau where kaiārahi are experienced and well-connected

60. Kaiārahi were recruited for these new roles by the local WOCA partner organisations and had a wide range of background and experience. Around half of those we interviewed had been recently working in Whānau Ora roles while others came from health, justice, the arts, factory work and self-employment. They all appeared well suited to their roles with compassion, empathy and dedication to whānau coming through as consistent attributes. They were non-judgemental, champions for whānau and relentless in their advocacy.
61. Some kaiārahi that were new to this type of Kaupapa struggled a bit in the beginning because their knowledge of tools and resources that could help whānau was limited. Over the year they learned and drew on the knowledge and experience held by colleagues or peer kaiārahi and felt more confident. Other kaiārahi had years, sometimes decades, in social sector work and could immediately draw on resources to help whānau or knew of entitlements they could seek before

approaching Te Kete Oranga. This experience likely resulted in faster progress for whānau and savvy use of government resources.

62. The seven regional coordinator roles were appreciated by kaiārahi. These roles had regional oversight of the implementation of Ngā Tini Whetū in their areas for WOCA, supported workforce development and managed regional reporting. The 16 Programme Managers did not directly manage kaiārahi but supported recruitment, coordinated their cohort within the region including keeping on track and holding individual and cohort meetings for information sharing and support.

This was a new way of working that required a focus on flourishing rather than supporting whānau in crisis

63. Some programme managers and kaiārahi shared the challenge of having to shift ways of working as the result of many years in a deficit system focused on outputs. They had to consciously focus on whānau dreaming, aspirations and flourishing rather than 'what is wrong that needs to be fixed'? While those already in a Whānau Ora space inherently work in a holistic and strengths-based way, they focus on challenges. Ngā Tini Whetū requires a complete shift in focus to empowering whānau towards achieving their dreams. There may be challenges initially that are blocking the way and need to be dealt with, but attention stays on the dream.
64. A related challenge for a few was a tendency to be overly prudent with Te Kete Oranga in some cases. This stemmed from public procurement conditioning where partners had to apply scarce funding to a multitude of needs and had to account for every dollar within quite rigid parameters. Whānau Ora Direct has been a change to the traditional procurement model with \$1,000 able to be spent reasonably flexibly to address urgent whānau needs. By contrast, Te Kete Oranga was \$15,000 per whānau and some, including in management roles, struggled initially to let whānau determine how this was used. They had learned over many years to itemise the pūtea and align with acceptable forms of expenditure, a practice that had to be unlearned with this approach. This challenge may have contributed to significant underspend of Te Kete Oranga in year one, alongside the larger issue of COVID-19-related delays to programme implementation.

Kaiārahi workload and resourcing appear set at appropriate levels

65. Investment in the kaiārahi model appeared highly effective, with whānau extremely grateful for this personal support towards identifying and advancing their own aspirations. Kanohi ki te kanohi care and attention is what they needed and kaiārahi felt their roles, with in-built flexibility and resourcing, were invaluable.
66. No kaiārahi spoke about feeling underpaid or undervalued and nearly all felt the 1:10 ratio to whānau worked well. Humility and dedication were key attributes among kaiārahi that emerged during the evaluation. They spoke at length about the many challenges whānau faced and were overcoming - and this was their focus.
67. Most were working with ten whānau for Ngā Tini Whetū. A few kaiārahi had taken on more whānau when a colleague had left, sometimes just temporarily but in isolated cases this became permanent. For example, one kaiārahi had 16 whānau to work with after a colleague left the job, and for her this was manageable.

68. Many kaiārahi, however, spoke about working evenings and weekends as this was often the optimal time to meet or speak with whānau. No one complained about this as they knew this was an important element of what made their role effective. However, this should be recognised by employers and funders as a unique and challenging element of the job.

Benefits to whānau and kaiārahi as a result of agency involvement

69. We identified unanticipated learnings due to ACC being a partner in this programme. Kaiārahi and programme managers spoke about having become more personally conscious of injury prevention and passing these learnings on to whānau. Spending time in homes with whānau made it easy and practical to begin conversations about making the whare safer for adults and tamariki. One team brought first aid kits for all of their Ngā Tini Whetū whānau to help start the discussion about keeping safe and avoiding injuries. Another team, sited near the ocean, made it a focus to speak with whānau about swimming lessons for tamariki and in at least another two places Te Kete Oranga was drawn on to pay for tamariki swimming lessons. In Te Tai Tokerau, kaumātua were supported with new sliding doors, ramps and windows to improve wheelchair access, airflow and warmth to prevent ongoing respiratory illnesses.

70. Partners also knew upfront if whānau have or have had any engagement with Oranga Tamariki and work proactively with them around any live issues involving their children. The Te Hinatore framework was used to guide these discussions at the start of the process and any shifts checked along the way. The focus for whānau was to keep on the path towards Mauri oho, flourishing whānau with mana, as described by Tā Mason Durie's framework for Ngā Tini Whetū. The evaluation team cannot overstate the importance of this framing for whānau. Working in a strengths-based way is a game changer for whānau: it is enabling, empowering and mana-enhancing through the highs, lows and everything in between that whānau experience.

Te Kete Oranga is set at a good level and its flexibility supports community networking

71. Te Kete Oranga appeared to be set at the right level to make the positive difference that whānau are seeking. It was designed with built-in flexibility so that the \$15,000 per whānau could go directly to purchase or pay for things identified in the whānau plan (invoices submitted) or part of it could be used across the cohort to pay for shared goals such as first aid lessons for all participating whānau. This flexibility in the funding model recognised that one size does not fit all and empowers whānau to unrestrictedly determine their own pathway towards their aspirations.

Not only were we working towards their moemoeā we were looking at the current whānau situation. A lot of them, like one whānau... five kids, didn't really have a vehicle, the vehicle they did have was too small so they couldn't go out as a whānau and dad was always needing it for work and stuff like that and so we... started prioritising things with the whānau. So, I sit there and go okay if you could get something right now what would that be, "Oh whaea, a bigger vehicle so we can get the kids to school and do all the stuff" but mum also wanted to have the children put into community activities like boxing and swimming because she had an incident with her babies ... they went to the beach and one of the kids got caught up in a rip and they're all under... And she says, "oh my gosh I need to teach my children not to be afraid of water and how to cope if that happens again." (Kaiārahi)

72. Different approaches were taken by the various partner organisations during the prototype, but most providers worked through the needs and aspirations of whānau before introducing the concept of financial support from Te Kete Oranga. They felt this could divert whānau focus from the process of working through to moemoeā. In a few cases the partner organisation had decided to be transparent with whānau from the beginning letting them know about the fund and its value.

Oh, my goodness, that is like winning Lotto for a lot of the whānau. You know it was only \$15,000 each but it was hard at first because they didn't have it in their hand, they couldn't sort of grasp it at first. (Kaiārahi)

It wasn't easy to sell it in the beginning. When you say to whānau that you're going to work with them for a period of two years, they kind of see as WINZ and we're always going to be calling them and being hōhā and so one thing I didn't do was tell them how much financial assistance I had because I wanted them to, I suppose, be honest with what they needed help with. (Kaiārahi)

73. Both approaches appeared to be fine for whānau as they were closely supported by the kaiārahi, and focus stayed on the whānau plan. In either approach there was a process to safeguard the expenditure. The funds were tagged to the whānau, but a manager approved any spend after independently checking the whānau plan and how the funds would support the aspirations. The pūtea was carefully managed, gratefully received by whānau and was having significant impact.

74. An unintended benefit mentioned by many kaiārahi was whānau seemingly more interested, feeling knowledgeable and wanting to be careful with money. Sometimes this was supported by proactive sessions around financial literacy but for others it was spurred by having a large amount to consider and carefully manage.

I know the deliverables are quite broad to ensure that we provide that right support that is customised to our whānau to hit their goals and aspirations. That gave us the ability to really customise it and be innovative and also be very supportive for them individually. Because each whānau's at a different level as well. So, it's given us room to kind of manoeuvre but ensuring that the full pūtea is also supportive and spent on them. (Kaiārahi)

75. Workshops or seminars appeared to be a good use of some of the funding where cohorts had similar goals and subject matter experts could be brought in. This was cost-effective across a group plus it created opportunities for whānau on similar journeys to get together. These opportunities sparked friendships and networks, some further enabled by a Facebook page or nurtured by whānau themselves. In one rural area, a kaiārahi shared how whānau had actively started looking after one another when one of their group had to isolate with COVID-19. She was amazed at the transformation among a group that had previously had little social contact outside their families and were now looking after each other.

General support for a one-year programme

76. The length of the programme at one year appeared to be a good amount of time for close working between kaiārahi and whānau. It was a long amount of time but with a defined end point so that whānau could be quite focused about what they wanted to achieve in that time.

That was heaps of time... we took our time. We just really needed to zone in on, we had so much going on at once we had to really sit down and sort of zone in on our sort of goals. (Whānau)

77. Another line of thinking was that a longer period could support success of those who may need extra support, on a case-by-case basis. The prototype was being trialled during the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns which impacted the consistency of contact by some kaiārahi or affected the type of activities that could be undertaken (e.g., Seminars postponed, or face-to-face services suspended). COVID-19, or unique situations for whānau, saw some withdraw completely or withdraw and then return when ready. In those situations, that cannot be planned for, a degree of flexibility worked well.

There was probably a good four months that we functioned in lockdown, so we did zoom which was awesome as well. I think that goes to show that you can still do it during that time, and there's enough time to put plans and that together. But I think it was like 18 months or a little bit longer would have been helpful. (Whānau)

78. The evaluation revisited a small number of whānau six months after they had formally completed their time on the prototype, and they all were still in contact with their kaiārahi. This additional time given by kaiārahi was hugely valued by whānau for helping to keep them motivated or just knowing there was someone who knew and cared about their journey. This extra work by kaiārahi was possible because of their compassion and dedication to their local community but was not part of the contract.

Tuawhā: Interagency collaboration and system impact

In this section, findings fall into the following themes:

- This unique inter-agency collaboration worked well for whānau because agencies maintained distance from implementation
- Whānau Ora is an effective delivery model for whānau Māori, as tested since 2014, and there are robust systems in place to provide assurance
- Agencies are constrained by the system's individualised portfolios and focus on risk which challenge working in a holistic, whānau-centred way (towards achieving Whānau Ora outcomes)
- High public service turnover can impede consistency of support for innovative approaches like Ngā Tini Whetū
- Regional agency offices lacked awareness of Ngā Tini Whetū which could have been an opportunity for developing local inter-agency relationships, cultural capability building (through working with kaiārahi and partners) as well as easing service access for whānau.

Whānau Ora continues to evidence that devolution to serve whānau Māori is working

79. In commissioning this evaluation, the participating government agencies agreed that: an inter-agency relationship is only useful and effective if the outcomes it delivers will specifically meet the needs and aspirations of whānau. This evaluation found that the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype does meet the needs and aspirations of whānau in a way that is unique to the system.

80. Ngā Tini Whetū is about rangatiratanga – whānau achieving their own aspirations, whatever they are, at their own pace, and increasing self-sufficiency and ownership over their own lives. When they have that, their relationship with state agencies changes from any form of need or dependency to a contributor (via taxes) and occasional user of services.

81. Agencies, overall, want both of these things: thriving, self-sufficient whānau and lower system costs achieved through fewer citizens *needing* government intervention. With this evaluation we were asked how government services can connect more effectively with Whānau Ora and vice versa. Government agencies can acknowledge where their efforts have not worked and trust the plentiful evidence that the Whānau Ora approach is working for Māori.
82. Working through a Whānau Ora commissioning approach since 2014 has supplied a good degree of evidence for government about their effectiveness in working with whānau. WOCA does extensive monitoring and reporting to account for any public funding it receives. The Whānau Ora model has been independently reviewed and affirmed as an approach that works.¹¹ The recent pandemic response by WOCA and others in this commissioning space to reach whānau Māori and vaccinate the community further evidenced their reach and effectiveness.

This inter-agency collaboration is effective for whānau, but agencies are challenged by competing interests

83. It is challenging for government agencies to be expected to work more holistically when they are legislated and funded to deliver on a particular work programme. ACC's interests are primarily in maintaining population health and preventing injury while Oranga Tamariki's focus is the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children. Working together to design, fund and share oversight of Ngā Tini Whetū as an early intervention initiative was a new and positive step for ACC and Oranga Tamariki.
84. Te Puni Kōkiri has a growth and development focus and has worked with Whānau Ora agencies for many years and knows it works well for whānau, largely due to navigational support. Te Puni Kōkiri staff understand the benefits of taking a strengths-based approach and how to apply the Whānau Ora Outcomes Framework to policy development. As an agency, for Ngā Tini Whetū, they shared and trusted in the Whānau Ora outcomes to guide the programme's measure of success.
85. ACC and Oranga Tamariki officials were excited about the potential of Ngā Tini Whetū to support their purpose and aims, although their individual foci still drove an additional, separate set of outcomes to be developed for the programme. This was driven by the need to report to their executive team and ministers on a more closely defined set of markers. While Whānau Ora outcomes encapsulate health and wellbeing for the whole family including many other elements that drive prosperity, these are not yet familiar enough and well used in public service departments.

Whānau Ora outcomes (still) hold potential for supporting system change

86. Ngā Tini Whetū is underpinned by the achievement of Whānau Ora outcomes, recognised as six key markers of wellbeing for whānau. Kaiārahi use a series of related domains when they begin working with whānau:
- *Whānau enjoy high standards of living*
 - *Whānau relationships are rewarding and empowering*
 - *Whānau actively participate in communities*
 - *Whānau are engaged in te ao Māori*

¹¹ <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/nga-putea-me-nga-ratonga/whanau-ora/whanau-ora-review>

- *Whānau are healthy*
- *Whānau are knowledgeable and well informed*

87. These domains inform the kaiārahi process in terms of identifying strengths and challenges with the whānau and then, with a plan in place, any shifts are tracked as measurement of progress. In addition to any existing aspirations, working through these domains can help whānau think holistically about long-term whānau prosperity. Having been considered ‘at-risk’ as a whānau to be eligible for this programme, it is likely they have been struggling and not had the opportunity to think about these elements and how they can contribute to a better life and wellbeing.

88. Starting a conversation with whānau about exercise and healthy living, for instance, can lead to small changes that improve whānau health but also impact other areas of life. One kaiārahi introduced her whole whānau cohort to a new sport which led to exercise, fun, built confidence and self-belief. Another kaiārahi talked about the positive health and social impacts on tamariki when exposed to new sports, with fees paid by Te Kete Oranga.

So where the families had once wanted to run away and hide that was quite a big transformation for her getting them on softball teams, getting them to live that healthier type lifestyle, them believing that they could actually achieve those outcomes....engaging them in activities that they ended up very much enjoying but hadn't participated in before. (Programme Manager)

Put them into the boxing academy ... to help build up the older one's confidence and making friends because he didn't know how to make friends. Now he's got too many. So yeah. And mum loves it ... we put them into Kelly club sports to help them just to build relationships, now mum is so happy. (Kaiārahi)

89. Te Puni Kōkiri applies the Whānau Ora Outcomes Framework in its work but there is variable use of it in other agencies. Agencies managing public services where there are negative, inequitable outcomes for Māori, including Oranga Tamariki and ACC but also many others, can use this resource to guide how they view issues and design solutions. Central to the framework's application is having the cultural capability to understand what it means to be whānau-centred, taking a strengths-based position, and recognising the connectedness of things by taking a holistic approach.

Vote funding system constrains innovation and inter-agency collaboration

90. Finding a funding solution for two government agencies and a Crown Entity to pool their resources into WOCA for this prototype was not straightforward. Various attempts were made, as documented in the earlier *Lessons Learnt* report. The group worked through options including agencies transferring funds directly to Te Puni Kōkiri, thinking the 2020 public sector reforms would make it a seamless process, but this approach was inconsistent with the Public Finance Act. In the end, they pooled funding using the Vote transfer mechanism from Oranga Tamariki to Te Puni Kōkiri and a Funding Agreement between ACC and Te Puni Kōkiri.

91. The Vote transfer needed joint ministerial approval from the Ministers for Oranga Tamariki, Māori Development and Finance. As a crown entity, ACC had more independence and was able to source and confirm funding within two weeks, helped by having an Injury Prevention Fund in place that gave them flexibility to be able to invest in Ngā Tini Whetū.

92. Despite the Public Service Act reforms that recognised and aimed to facilitate greater cross-agency collaboration, funding collaboration in this case was complicated and time-consuming. The reforms needed to be supported with practical funding flexibility options.

An enabler is government officials thinking outside the box instead of focusing on risk

93. This prototype was borne out of the consistently high and disproportionate rate of tamariki Māori in state care and protection as well as youth justice. Oranga Tamariki were motivated to explore early intervention opportunities and Te Puni Kōkiri and WOCA are driven to support whānau to be together and in control of their own lives. ACC – focused on maintaining health and preventing injury - joined the group once some planning was underway.

94. A number of senior leaders and officials saw the potential in identifying whānau that could be at risk of needing state intervention and providing Māori-led, wrap-around support and guidance towards greater independence instead. For others, though, it was challenging to give up operational control and understand how commissioning via WOCA would work. As one official noted:

This is forcing government agencies and Crown entities to think differently about how we commission, there is a whole bunch of learning for each of us about how hard it is to do this kind of work when we aren't the sole controller¹²

95. While the agencies, ACC and WOCA established a comprehensive structure to govern and lead the prototype, it took time for some officials to be clear about their limited role in implementation. There was concern about risk – funding and commissioning at arm's length, lack of control over delivery and return on investment - so the process to get the prototype under way was dependent on good relationships and trust between senior leaders across the organisations. ACC joined the group later than Oranga Tamariki but came in with some more understanding about Whānau Ora which helped their transition.

96. Making Ngā Tini Whetū happen was dependent on a group of people in government committing to working differently and thinking outside of the box. It needed senior leaders thinking this way to activate levers, convince other senior leaders and encourage officials. Without them it may not have been launched.

Challenging for agencies to maintain consistent input to inter-agency initiative

97. During interviews we considered the relationship between agencies and what factors might contribute to a successful inter-agency collaboration. A collaborative way of working is predicated on trusted relationships and held together with good leadership, all of which is hard to sustain when there is high staff turnover.

98. Initially, we found great enthusiasm in the agencies for taking a different approach that was led out locally by Whānau Ora. But over the two years there was a lot of turnover at senior and officials' levels. This affected membership of the governance and working groups and seemingly overall energy for the Kaupapa. This was perhaps exemplified by the agencies drafting a terms of reference to guide how they work together but, being unable to agree on the content, it was not finalised. We also observed a significant drop off in meetings of the governance group.

¹² Aiko (May 2021). *Ngā Tini Whetū: Lessons Learnt*, p.18.

Low awareness of Ngā Tini Whetū and minimal engagement between participating agencies in regions

99. Ngā Tini Whetū was seen by whānau as a Māori programme delivered by a local Māori service provider, with some aware of a relationship to Whānau Ora or the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency. As a result, there is little positive impact on how whānau view the agencies due to them being a funder of the programme, but direct benefits to whānau by virtue of their involvement.
100. Collaboration or even communication between agencies about Ngā Tini Whetū appeared low in the regions. There were some examples of localized inter-agency cooperation, including at least two cohorts that focused specifically on whānau engaged with Oranga Tamariki, but these were isolated and driven by kaiārahi or their provider based on local need. Overall, there was generally low awareness of the prototype among participating agencies at a regional level, based on our interviews with kaiārahi.
101. Our impression was that the Whānau Ora partners delivering Ngā Tini Whetū generally had low local engagement with participating government agencies on this programme. They often knew their agency counterparts due to other mahi, such as seeking emergency accommodation placements as Whānau Ora navigators previously. However, if they were in contact in relation to Ngā Tini Whetū, kaiārahi found that many of their local ACC, TPK and Oranga Tamariki staff were unaware of the programme.

We kind of sourced other areas which is quite sad because when I asked them about Ngā Tini Whetū they didn't even know and yet they're one of the biggest sponsors you know. They hadn't, they're like, 'what's Ngā Tini Whetū?' so you had to go and tell them. So yeah like even, not even TPK knew ...So none of them knew what it meant, and then a guy from ACC rang up ...and he goes, 'oh yes I just googled Ngā Tini Whetū and we're like one of the funders for it'. I'm like, yeah, I know. (Regional Coordinator)

102. In a few cases, providers were engaged with local, participating agencies and saw the benefits of information- and resource-sharing for whānau. In one rōpū, the programme manager had given a presentation to agency staff about both their organisation and Ngā Tini Whetū which led to them working better together.

Definitely in the Oranga Tamariki process ... we're starting to work a lot more alongside ACC. Yes and that's around kaupapa Māori health services and being able to support whānau...Because our funding is the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency we don't have direct conversations with TPK or Oranga Tamariki or ACC but ... we've started working alongside them a lot more. (Programme Manager)

Case studies

103. The evaluation team initially interviewed whānau in May and June 2022 as most were nearing the end of their year working with a kaiārahi. We then revisited four whānau in November/December 2022 to check in on progress towards their moemoeā and other impacts of the programme since they completed. Below are their journeys with names changed to protect identities.

Case study tahi: Hek's whānau

Hek is an 18 year-old male with a two-year old daughter. He lives in a small North Island town with fewer than 5,000 people.

Hek has a supportive whānau and when we met him he was being a full time pāpā. He had just emerged from a court process to gain custody of his daughter after his former partner had left town with their child and informed him by text. He had been at a crossroads that day:

I had two choices that day ... My first option was I going to go and get all my mates and I was going to go up to Auckland and go deal with her myself. But then I thought no, I cannot, I could not handle seeing my daughter through prison bars. So, I took the legal way ...and I won.

With his parenting order in place, Hek was referred by whānau to a marae trust to get some support to navigate his way forward as a young, solo parent and agreed to join the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype. He was an ideal candidate: a motivated young man with proven resilience already but potentially on a precipice of doing well or falling back, without some guidance. He began working with Ngaire in October 2021.

Hek was on a benefit but did not want to be because it was quite common among his extended whānau and he wanted to be different. He found the social welfare process “very, very scary” and felt disappointed in himself for having to be on a benefit after doing fairly well at school.

My extended family, like my uncles and my aunties, they are all on the benefit and I wanted to be different. And at the start I was a bit like ... I'm just another, you know, person on the benefit.

His goals, planned out with Ngaire, were to get his own whare (independent from whānau), get his driving license, get a car and complete high school. He wanted to achieve this while being the primary caregiver for his daughter who was his biggest motivation. Despite being motivated, the year was hugely challenging for Hek as a young, solo dad. He credits Ngaire with keeping him positive and on track, and valued her being available when he needed her, being consistent and supportive of his achievements along the way.

I wouldn't be where I am without [Kaiārahi name]... she actually genuinely cares. I know you can get some people that are just there to do their job for the money, she's not ... she's there for you genuinely and has your best interests at heart. She's a very genuine person and she's just always there for you.

She always phones, and I often ring her sometimes when I'm down low, but she always has the ability to just pick me up with her words and reminds me of all the good things that I've completed.

After eight months working with Ngaire, Hek was living independently with his daughter, had completed high school - achieving Level 3 NCEA - and was about to go for his restricted license. Ngaire had also connected him to a young parents group. While he is the only male in the group he has kept attending and learns tips and tricks as well as taking on the maternal perspectives on parenting around him.

In terms of wider effects, Hek's license and car mean he can ensure his daughter attends kohanga reo and is immersed in Māori, something he and his former partner really wanted for her. His daughter also has a number of health conditions and Hek can now get her to hospital appointments without having to rely on others. This, and the independent whare, are important for his sense of mana and rangatiratanga, and he is not engaged directly with any government services.

After 12 months working with Ngairē, Hek had achieved his restricted license and has a job working in retail which works in with his parenting. He is really enjoying earning his own money and not being on a benefit. His outlook now is:

To just keep chugging along and don't let nobody put my fire out and just keep bettering myself and just keep pushing forward and being a positive role model for my girl.

NTW Hinatore Framework outcomes	Whānau outcomes after 1 yr on NTW
Knowledgeable and well-informed	More informed about his options, has clear goals with a plan to achieve them.
Healthy	With a vehicle, licence and employment, Hek can be proactive in accessing medical support for his daughter. He is positive and well within himself.
Actively participate in communities	Employed and participating in young parents group
Engaged in te ao Māori	His daughter continues at kohanga
Enjoy high standards of living	Wants to, working on it. The new job has made a difference in his life in terms of keeping busy and earning pūtea.
Relationships are rewarding and empowering	Supportive whānau and whānau-in-law and has been empowered by the genuine care from his kaiārahi
Oranga Tamariki goals	Thriving. Hek's daughter is having her medical needs met, is attending kohanga reo, has an engaged parent who wants the best for her and has good support around him.
ACC interests	Proactive around vehicle licensing and health; knows services to access.

Case study rua: Anahera's whānau

Anahera has a partner who works in a trade and together they have four children, including one born just a year ago. They live in a reasonably large urban centre in the North Island.

Anahera was working on her bachelor studies in a much-needed mental health service area. In order to complete her degree, she had to pay for a large number of practicum sessions but did not have the money. In looking for help she was engaged on the Ngā Tini Whetū pilot. She met the criteria by being in a stable position with dreams but facing challenges to achieve them.

Her kaiārahi was Lucy who came to her whare and worked with her to mind map her goals beyond the degree and how to achieve them step by step. Throughout the year, Lucy kept in constant contact including by connecting Anahera with other people on the programme with similar goals to share experience and motivate one another. She would also bring in outside support as needed.

Anahera credited the tikanga basis and whakawhanaungatanga between her and Lucy as being critical to her journey as, in her words, it:

makes a huge difference in being able to interact the best way we know how and not trying to put a mask on to be accepted by the western, how they deal with things because a lot of it is jumping through hoops. But this time it's natural to be able to achieve something that you put in place for yourself without it being judged or you know overlooked. And so that's what I found the most help with Ngā Tini Whetū.

With Lucy's support and the funding Te Kete Oranga, she completed her degree, has a provisional license to practice and has planned an innovative business idea using her skills in a high demand service area. As well as raising her newborn and other children she is working for others now while she tries to source business start-up funding.

Anahera's time with Ngā Tini Whetū has completed but Lucy is connecting those on the programme so that they can maintain contact between themselves and keep a support network going. Anahera has kept on track with her goals and feels confident about achieving them post-programme. She highly valued having someone independent to encourage her to achieve what she knew she could.

She is very supportive ... constant communication to keep to our word when setting our goals and making sure that we're able to stick to them ... the constant follow-up and support and providing that for us to make sure that we were going to succeed. And I think that's one of the biggest barriers right, is just knowing that someone is there other than your whānau to push you to do the things that need to be done to make sure that we're going to succeed ... it's always different when it comes from somebody else.

Anahera is proud to have shown her tamariki what they can achieve too and to model achieving a bachelor's degree (while having a new baby). Her two oldest have clear goals with one now going into tertiary education and another into an apprenticeship.

What came with my goals was a degree and with that degree ... opens up many doors, financially as well. ... So, with my degree and the goals that I have I have achieved so far it's an obvious change too within my whānau and our lifestyle and how we choose to live and things like that. ...those goals are ... coming to fruition and obviously overall the health and wellbeing of the whānau is always going to be good, always going to be better.

In terms of wider effects, Anahera's degree and ability to practice will be of enormous benefit to Māori communities, as there are few Māori specialists in her field. Her practice will support good health and injury prevention, as well as broader whānau wellbeing. She is currently working in schools with tamariki and supporting their mental health needs.

NTW Hinatore Framework outcomes	Whānau outcomes after 1 yr on NTW
Knowledgeable and well-informed	Anahera achieved her degree and is proactive in accessing services
Healthy	Active community leader for mental wellbeing
Actively participate in communities	She volunteers her time as well as being employed in the community
Engaged in te ao Māori	Her degree is through a Māori provider and her work is steeped in te ao Māori
Enjoy high standards of living	Both adults have stable career outlook
Relationships are rewarding and empowering	Positive wider whānau unit, supportive of each other's goals.
Oranga Tamariki goals	Thriving. Older children are working on their own dreams.
ACC interests	Proactive around mental wellbeing and able to access information and support; partner's job has strong health and safety guidelines.

Case study toru: Dawn's whānau

Dawn has three children between the ages of three and six and is parenting by herself in a small settlement. She was isolated, drinking and smoking drugs – all of which had contributed to her having no motivation and social anxiety.

In this region, the focus for Ngā Tini Whetū was whānau who have intergenerational involvement with care and protection and youth justice. For the partner organisation, that was what needed direct resourcing into whānau to try and disrupt the pattern and *"even though people have a lot of challenges in their lives...it doesn't mean that they don't have dreams"* [Programme manager].

They were well connected to the local Oranga Tamariki office, sought referrals for Ngā Tini Whetū and worked with a Māori staffer there who had been through the system herself. Oranga Tamariki were engaged with Dawn around concerns for the children's welfare and they were placed with whānau members for a few months while Dawn focused on herself through the programme. Dawn appreciated that these services worked together to support her.

I needed to sort myself out and just couldn't do it with the kids with me. As hard as it was, you know, we all needed that. Them being with whānau was good, I mean, still bloody hard, but thinking back was best

for everyone. The OT social worker was Māori and she was good. You know, didn't judge me, sort of worked with [Kaiārahi] and made it about the kids first and tautoko me to get help at same time. Heaps get their kids taken off them and looked after by people they don't even know, I'm lucky really. I know that.

We met Dawn in July 2022 when she was just about to finish up with her kaiārahi. She said that the experience had changed her life. She previously had no self-confidence, had not known what services were available to her and never thought she could achieve her moemoeā.

My moemoeā was to make rongoā but I needed help myself. I was isolated, I would not leave my home, i was on drugs and alcohol, they brought me out of that, to stop drinking, to stop smoking drugs, to be financially stable, to help me believe I can do it on my own, to help me get out of toxic relationships, more how I feel about being on my own.

She realised how stuck she was and that it was negatively impacting her children. She credited her kaiārahi and the chance to meet other mothers like her through Ngā Tini Whetū for helping her believe in herself, improve how she communicates with her children, interacting socially again and broadening her world through new experiences. She achieved her license and with Te Kete Oranga bought a car which gives her and her children more opportunities to go places. Te Kete also helped pay off some bills which was a burden and stress for her. She began growing vegetables and learning te reo Māori because her children do at kohanga and kura and she wants to communicate with them while they're learning too.

From the whanau hui I realised I didn't have social anxiety, it was awesome, same things we had in common. Women who want to grow, it was mean. Most of them are your whānau too in [her town] and they don't want to grow.

She still struggled a bit, it was not perfect, but she was seeing an addictions counsellor and was proud of herself for resisting alcohol and knew she was feeling clearer and doing a lot more with her tamariki. She remains at risk because of the environment she lives in and a lack of a positive support network.

I keep needing to focus on the positives, it's still a struggle. I don't have many friends to talk with that's good, supportive. A lot of people in this town are tainted with drugs and alcohol, you're kind of lonely all of the time.

At the end of 2022, around five months after completing Ngā Tini Whetū, s

She still had a challenging relationship with alcohol but had increased her resilience, she was learning strategies with her counsellor and had been sober for three months. Dawn was still keeping in contact with her kaiārahi and feeling motivated towards achieving her goals.

Still working on my rongoā – and want to practice one day to help other whānau. I think the reo class is helping me heaps, too you know? Work on me, then I can help others. Me and [kaiārahi] have a kōrero about this, having my goals and dreams and don't stop.

...I thank NTW and big ups to (Kaiārahi) because it's taken her to come into my life to spark motivation, her understanding and openness of her life has made a difference in my world.

NTW Hinatore Framework outcomes	Whānau outcomes after 1 yr on NTW
Knowledgeable and well-informed	Dawn is much better informed about supports available to her and her children; increased confidence to access services herself.
Healthy	Sober for several months, feeling clearer and knows it is having a good impact on her tamariki; they get out and do things together more as a whānau
Actively participate in communities	Was very isolated and now has met other māmās, realises she is not as socially anxious as she thought; aspires to help people like her kaiārahi
Engaged in te ao Māori	Whole whānau is learning te reo Māori and Dawn is learning about rongoā

Enjoy high standards of living	Has changed where which is an improvement but not yet enjoying high standard of living
Relationships are rewarding and empowering	Has drawn a lot from engaging with her kaiārahi and Ngā Tini Whetū cohort; other relationships in her settlement and some whānau are challenging, disempowering.
Oranga Tamariki goals	Tamariki are not in care and are safer in where without alcohol/drugs; are going to kohanga/kura, engaging in te ao Māori; see māmā doing better.
ACC interests	Whānau is a lot safer without alcohol and drug use; licensed driver; in better where; growing vegetables and high interest/learning about Māori healing practice.

Case study whā: Mani and Tai's whānau

Tai and Mani live in a suburb of a large city with their three tamariki who were aged between six months and five years of age when we met them in May 2022. Neither Tai nor Mani completed school, they engage with WINZ regarding benefits, and have had visits from the Police and Oranga Tamariki. We met them in May 2022 when they were about to complete a year of Ngā Tini Whetū which they found transformative.

This couple was already on a personal development journey before the programme, having been referred by Police to a marae trust after several domestic incidents several years earlier.

Been a long road for us. A hard road. Yep, we were kind of always having the cops come over, we weren't in a good place. Fighting, stupid arguments, and someone, a neighbour would call the cops. That's how we met [kaiārahi]. Had to sort out our shit or we'd lose the kids. We don't hate the cops. They are doing their job eh. Best thing they did was get us to work with [kaiārahi].

They had a year and a half of weekly and then monthly visits with the trust, navigating their way through some challenges. Tai participated in group work around anger management and parenting.

You know when I first started, I thought I was too cool for the men's course. Heaps of us did. But you learn about you, and what's really going on. It helped me heaps, gave me tools, made me aware.... That was the first point that I knew I was on the wrong road dealing with it all and how far I've come. There's no chance I'd stoop that low again.

Their kaiārahi at the marae trust spoke up for the couple when Oranga Tamariki visited about the welfare of their children. She believed in them (which they valued so much) to sort through their issues, referring them both on to a parenting course. This was a critical step in acknowledging behaviours and gaining awareness about the impact this was having around them.

Kind of made us realise how selfish we were both being and how our kids must be feeling.

This work created a more stable base for the couple and their tamariki and they were then asked if they wanted to join Ngā Tini Whetū. Fortunately, this meant they were able to keep working with the same kaimahi from the marae trust. They already had a good relationship with her as well as the rest of the team but this time they got to focus on the future, their strengths and their aspirations. They did a business course and were inspired by people ("like us") who had started their own businesses.

They worked with their kaiārahi to brainstorm and create a plan for their future. Foremost for them was achieving independence from the benefit, being self-reliant and building their self-confidence. At first they identified a business idea that was familiar to them but working through the practicalities of it showed them that they didn't really have a passion for that work. They instead identified another business idea that they felt was a better fit for them and was needed in their community.

By May 2022, the couple were 40 percent through a training course and Te Kete Oranga was drawn on to create a home office. They bought equipment for the business and created business cards and flyers. They

felt they now had purpose in their lives and their wider whānau had seen a massive improvement in how they were living and working together as a family.

We revisited Tai and Mani at the end of 2022, several months after completing Ngā Tini Whetū. They had both completed their year long training, the business was up and running and the kids are in school/daycare and are happy.

We aren't fighting and having the cops turn up. They seem happy cause now dad is working, mum is less stressed. Don't worry, we still argue, but it's not as bad and we don't fight. We have skills to help us.

It is hard work and they are not earning a great amount yet but demand is building and they may even take on another worker in the future. They credit the marae trust and their kaiārahi with saving them through genuine care and support. Their kaiārahi still checks in and offers advice and support even though the programme is completed, they are part of the same community.

The people that you talk to are like your friends and completely relatable, they ask you what your issues are, other places categorise these terms, and [marae trust] is a lot more face to face and just loving and extremely supportive. They only want the best for our people in the future. It's so much more different than any other organisation. The kaimahi come to your house whenever you need them, they'd do anything, they help you build courage, and structure, motivate, they ask how you would like to do something.

NTW Hinatore Framework outcomes	Whānau outcomes after 1 yr on NTW
Knowledgeable and well-informed	Mani and Tai completed a business course and then a year-long training to support their new business (from no school quals); more informed about supports and services; open to the role of statutory agencies.
Healthy	Off benefit and new business is active, outdoors
Actively participate in communities	New business requires daily engagement with community, promotion and service deliver. Tamariki are in education.
Engaged in te ao Māori	Unclear
Enjoy high standards of living	Little change yet as business is in early stages
Relationships are rewarding and empowering	Anger management and parenting courses provided tools to help healthy relationships, there is greater awareness of the children's needs.
Oranga Tamariki goals	Whānau is together, tamariki are happier, safe and cared for; parents better understand how their behaviour impacts children; in school/daycare.
ACC interests	Whare was decluttered to make way for home office, potentially safer; healthier relationships.

Conclusions and recommendations

104. It was a privilege to speak with whānau Māori and kaiārahi as they experienced the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype. Whānau felt heard and valued and were grateful for the personal support that allowed them to move closer to what they wanted for themselves. Kaiārahi strongly endorsed the approach because it is grounded in te ao Māori, is strengths-based and is led by whānau and their aspirations.

Whānau experienced significant, positive change in their lives through Ngā Tini Whetū with practical tools and learnings gained that will continue to have impact

105. There were immediate outcomes yielding financial savings for the Crown including whānau coming off benefits and out of emergency accommodation, and tamariki remaining with whānau. The more sustainable impact though lies in the more widespread and profound change that occurred within whānau as a result of this programme. Whānau gained confidence and tools leading to changes in behaviour, improved communication between adults and with tamariki, greater self-awareness enabling good choices and positive outlooks for the future.

106. Whānau spoke about feeling motivated, having greater financial literacy and stability, feeling more connected to their culture and increased agency (control over their own resources and also knowing where to get help when needed). These shifts in whānau state suggests lower likelihood of referral to statutory agencies as well as lower potential reliance on social welfare.

107. There were numerous examples of preventative actions being undertaken with or by whānau that were done to improve their health and safety, as part of this programme. For example, whānau attending counselling and Alcohol and Other Drug programmes, attending parenting groups, driver training and licensing, swimming lessons and furniture and fittings to support good health and prevent injury.

108. The supported dreaming and planning element of this programme was an important part of Ngā Tini Whetū but also a valuable tool for future use. Some whānau had not thought about their future at all, stuck in the present and challenges like debt, while others had aspirations but did not know how to go about achieving them. With kaiārahi support they experienced brainstorming, developing plans and setting mini goals so that they quickly began to feel their own sense of achievement. They are now armed with these practical skills to share with their whānau and others.

109. Another group of whānau were in more stable situations but couldn't advance their aspirations for one of two reasons. The first was highly motivated whānau that had a financial block in their way – either lack of money or debt – and Te Kete Oranga cleared the barrier and supported them on their way (along with additional learnings from the process). The second was whānau who were managing fairly well in most areas of their lives but needed support to articulate, plan and progress their dreams to be self-employed.

Recommendation:

- There was broad support for Ngā Tini Whetū as a one-year programme, but flexibility is also required. Some whānau may take significant steps in a year but kaiārahi may also recognise that whānau need longer intensive support so as to not lose their momentum. Kaiārahi are best placed to determine if further funded support will enable sustained outcomes. We posit that, in some cases, an additional term of support could be warranted based on whānau positioning on Te Hinatore framework at the conclusion of the year. For example, if a whānau

has progressed from Ngā Whetū o te Mangōroa to Ngā Kāpehu Whetū during the first 12 months, another six or 12 months might ensure there is then sufficient resilience built to self-guide to full expression of mana.

Kaiārahi endorse the high-trust, flexible way of working and see success being sustained through whānau networks

110. Kaiārahi and their managers involved in this evaluation think this is the best programme they have experienced, and they want it to continue and influence other government-funded services. It was based on tikanga, strengths-based and flexible in recognising people's needs and aspirations vary – there is no single answer or pathway for a diverse group of people. Kaiārahi endorse the trust placed in them to work with whānau at the pace and approach that worked best for them. Funding assurance would help providers invest in and retain kaiārahi as this consistency is important for whānau.
111. Another consistent theme among kaiārahi was wariness among whānau of mainstream agencies and 'the system'; a sense of being let down before, not being understood and not worth the bother. Kaiārahi who have worked in those agencies before also spoke about the pressure to 'tick people off and get them off the books', a data and reporting-driven approach that doesn't solve the real needs whānau may have. Ngā Tini Whetū was the opposite in their view and there is a strong desire for the programme to continue because it works.
112. Whānau desire greater independence and self-sufficiency and are more likely to achieve this within a community of support. During the prototype, a number of cohort communities evolved mainly through kaiārahi bringing whānau together as a group to share their mahi or for workshops. These were particularly valuable opportunities for those who were socially isolated as well as to lessen general reliance on the kaiārahi role when Ngā Tini Whetū concludes.

Recommendations:

- Consider ways to build connectivity between whānau in the programme (if and when ready) so that they build their own community networks for ongoing motivation and support. As well as within regions and between cohorts, there could be on-line groups or networking sites, such as for whānau Māori starting new businesses or social enterprises.
- Kaiārahi (and by extension, whānau) could benefit from peer support opportunities. A strength of the prototype was that kaiārahi shared whakapapa or were from the same communities as the whānau they were working with. They did not have to be experienced in social work or Whānau Ora but there are benefits for whānau if kaiārahi are familiar with a range of public services and entitlements. Having local networks and knowing how to maximise resources, and helping to inform whānau about these options, supports positive outcomes. Building tuakana/teina relationships between kaiārahi could be useful.
- Continue to promote the concept of leveraging resources as a collective, including across regions, to support whānau - i.e., Business mentors.

State agencies can have faith in Whānau Ora providers who are backed by tested and reliable funding and reporting systems. Their approach works for whānau because they are trusted. Whānau trust in Government is more likely to build through devolution.

113. WOCA's network of partner organisations and the systems it has in place for funding and reporting is impressive. Despite the large number of partner organisations and participants involved, the prototype was rolled out, 80 kaiārahi were trained and supported, measures were comprehensively reported against and Te Kete Oranga distribution was well managed. This all occurred in the context of COVID-19 in which these organisations had essential service roles and significant (personal and professional) pressure to protect and support Māori in their communities.
114. The agencies and WOCA had done well to overcome the logistics of co-funding and collaboration to launch the prototype just a few months behind schedule. It was practical for Te Puni Kōkiri to be the conduit between government agencies and WOCA, having the Whānau Ora commissioning and reporting system in place. However, it does little to help build capability and support the growth of the Māori-Crown relationship if all the settings and connections are confined to Te Puni Kōkiri.
115. Ngā Tini Whetū was effective in prototype form with participating whānau well-served by WOCA and Whānau Ora partners, though it will take time to help improve whānau relations with government. We found high levels of fear and mistrust of government agencies which has tended to mean whānau do not seek the help they need; they miss out on services and this worsens outcomes for them and their children. Whānau Māori, especially those who do not believe they will be treated well by mainstream services, will engage with Māori and in places that feel familiar. Throughout the evaluation we heard whānau say that the office of the Whānau Ora partner or the way the kaiārahi spoke to them was relatable, they felt at ease, and from there they were open to engaging around their needs and aspirations.
116. There were glimpses of whānau who understand the job of the Police, Oranga Tamariki and other state agencies. More often, their perceptions had been softened by interactions being led out by Māori staff or through the intermediary efforts of Whānau Ora partners.
117. Impressions of Oranga Tamariki and ACC were not largely affected by their involvement in Ngā Tini Whetū as few whānau knew which agencies contributed and how the programme was funded. It was seen as a Māori programme delivered by a local Māori service provider, with some awareness of a relationship to Whānau Ora or the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency.
118. Government agencies can rename and remodel to make their offices feel more accessible, but it might not have any impact for whānau Māori. What works is being able to engage well with Māori, innately investing time in whakawhanaungatanga and manaaki – with no pre-judgement based on risk factors and statistics.
119. This is the fundamental difference between a Kaupapa Māori and western approach that is endlessly challenging for Māori public service providers. It accounts for why Whānau Ora outcomes are not more widely adopted across the public service because of learned behaviour to privilege risk rather than design for whānau to flourish. While agencies are under pressure to 'work better for Māori' and build capability to work with Māori, until they can change their approach it is counter-intuitive to poach the local Māori workforce and drain staff from more effective settings.

Recommendations:

- Members of the Governance Group are recommended to meet with the Public Service Commission and Treasury about this prototype and the complexities experienced in co-

funding. The Public Service Act 2020 reforms need to be supported with practical funding flexibility options which could go some way to help shift public sector culture and behaviours around risk over time.

- This evaluation does not provide a financial cost-benefit analysis but with an overall budget of \$42.4 million the prototype equated to a cost of \$53,000 per 800 whānau. We know that these whānau included 2,056 individuals with around half of those under the age of 18 years plus likely ripple effects to wider whānau, friends and community. A social return on investment analysis is recommended to further understand and predict the programme's ongoing impact.

Opportunity to improve local cooperation for more sustainable gains for whānau and agencies

- There was no formal relationship for Ngā Tini Whetū between Whānau Ora partners and agencies' local offices. Programme Managers appointed by WOCA had a role in communicating and supporting the prototype in their region and in some cases they did connect with local staff. However, local knowledge about the programme was variable which created more work for some kaiārahi. They expected local awareness of the programme from ACC, Te Puni Kōkiri and Oranga Tamariki as funders but often had to explain the programme to peers.
- Participating agency staff needed a good understanding of the aims of the programme and leadership encouraging them to work with local Whānau Ora partners to support Ngā Tini Whetū. Opportunities to help whānau and improve their perception of agencies may have been lost without this during the prototype.
- To bed in true local collaboration that ensures programmes are not duplicated or draw resource away from where it is needed, a whānau centred approach towards achieve whānau outcomes is required.
- There were some positive stories from whānau who experienced whānau-centred thinking from agency personnel including: a Māori Oranga Tamariki kaimahi who worked closely and compassionately with a māmā and the Whānau Ora partner to relocate her tamariki temporarily so that she could access addiction treatment; a tane who was arrested by the Police for domestic incidents but, instead of charging him, referred him to a local marae trust that then supported him through anger management and parenting classes. Both of these examples resulted in whānau lives being changed for the better and they felt positive towards those state agencies.

Recommendations:

- There is potential for other agencies to collaborate in Ngā Tini Whetū in future years. Advantages could include realising better outcomes for whānau early (before state agency or service engagement) and in building agency capability and understanding around Kaupapa Māori approaches. Principles for involvement are suggested as: co-funding, no direct role in delivery, well-informed and collaborative local staff available to support delivery partners where needed to support success of Ngā Tini Whetū whānau. Relevant agencies might include:
 - Work and Income NZ – benefits (high relevance for sole parents and disability support), emergency accommodation and housing supplements

- NZ Police – early intervention around youth and adult crime
- Corrections – supporting whānau that have members in the system or those who have been released and are in a stable, aspirational space.
- Practical considerations for any further agencies joining this inter-agency initiative are the funding model, leadership and operational expectations, as follows:
 - a) Funding model – co-funding for the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype was ultimately achieved through a Vote funding transfer (from Oranga Tamariki) and a Funding Agreement (with ACC) through Te Puni Kōkiri and then on to WOCA. It is reasonable to expect more practical options are facilitated by the Commission as part of the Public Service Act reforms ostensibly enabling greater inter-agency collaboration, with support from Treasury.
 - b) Leadership – for the prototype there were two groups in agency leadership roles for this kaupapa: A group of senior officials who met periodically in an oversight role (Governance Group) and an officials’ group which met more regularly to consider progress and any issues (Leadership Group). Neither of these groups was able to be consistently sustained throughout the prototype, resulting in a loss of shared leadership for the kaupapa. Sustained agency leadership (from the top) is critical.
 - c) Operations – agencies have the evidence they need to acknowledge that devolved commissioning can be effective and prudently delivered by WOCA and their network of local partners. If an agency has regional staff, these staff should understand the kaupapa, have the opportunity to meet local kaiārahi and build communication channels, and understand that they (the agency) are not part of the programme’s delivery but can play an important supporting role. Agency efforts can then focus more usefully on how to help shift central and regional agency cultures and behaviours to support whānau outcomes.

Appendices

Evaluation methodology

Evaluation focus and scope





1. The overarching evaluation question is:

To what extent is Ngā Tini Whetū enabling whānau potential and what conditions, settings and practices can support an effective interagency initiative?

2. The scope of the evaluation was the prototype’s service and management processes and the impact this is having, if any, on whānau in the programme. Impact is interpreted as whānau sense of wellbeing and progress towards achieving their own goals.
3. In this evaluation we focused on three levels:
 - how the form of commissioning in this prototype worked to support whānau to achieve outcomes (identifying “stepping stones” towards positive outcomes and potential for future impacts)
 - if and how the funding mechanisms enabled resources to reach whānau Māori to support their own solutions
 - to what extent system settings and levers aid or inhibit prototype objectives.
4. Out of scope was evaluating the Whānau Ora approach although we were interested in how Whānau Ora provision of early support to whānau changed the nature of whānau perception of, or interactions with government agencies, and vice versa. Financial cost/benefit analysis is out of scope.

Our approach

5. We developed the following evaluation logic for the evaluation covering the context which enabled Ngā Tini Whetū to be advanced as a cross-agency intervention, the system settings, resources and other inputs that meant it could be implemented, the outputs and impact.

Context	Inputs	Outputs	Impact
What were the conditions that enabled the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype to be introduced?	What resources, settings and supports were activated and employed?	What was delivered or required to be delivered through this approach?	How was the prototype experienced by whānau, kaiarahi, partners, WOCA and Agencies in different areas and contexts?
			
We will understand the role that these conditions had on what resources went into the	We will analyse the range of inputs, including financial, and understand the impact	We will document what was produced from this process and understand	We will understand if the prototype met needs and expectations, and supported whānau to

prototype, the outputs and impact	they made in terms of the key evaluation question	what was challenging and any lessons learned.	progress towards their outcomes.
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Methodology

6. The evaluation team conducted a kaupapa Māori evaluation approach which privileges a te ao Māori world view. We follow Smith's (1999, p120) seven kaupapa Māori practices to guide our engagement throughout recruitment, interviews, and analysis and reporting:
 - Aroha ki te tangata (respect for people)
 - Kanohi kitea (the seen face; that is, present yourself to people face-to-face)
 - Titiro, whakarongo. . . kōrero (look, listen. . . speak)
 - Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)
 - Kia tūpato (be cautious)
 - Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of the people)
 - Kaua e māhaki (do not flaunt your knowledge).
7. Kaupapa Māori methodology requires the team to acknowledge the validity of Māori knowledge and incorporate this knowledge and a Māori worldview in the interpretation and analysis of the evaluative data. (Pihama, Cram & Walker, 2002). We do this by looking critically at how Kaupapa Māori principles inform the process of analysis.
8. The evaluation of Ngā Tini Whetū was conducted over two phases:
 - Phase one – Inception and whakawhanaungatanga
 - Phase two – Experience of Ngā Tini Whetū
 - Phase three - Analysis

Phase one – Inception and whakawhanaungatanga

9. The evaluation team submitted a high-level draft evaluation plan to the Leadership Group in June 2021, in preparation for an inception hui. The Evaluation Plan was submitted to the Governance Group in late June/early July to finalise the Plan and given approval to proceed.
10. We confirmed the Ngā Tini Whetū theory of change and developed a set of evaluative criteria, underpinned by mātauranga Māori. We worked with Agencies to ascertain data requirements to support the evaluation. Each Agency had different data interests and requirements, so it was important to determine as a group what data is essential for the evaluation purpose, and feasible to collect. A starting point was recognising that each whānau involved in the trial has their own, unique characteristics and outcomes they are seeking. Each Agency also has their own outcome drivers while collectively working to the Government's Wellbeing Agenda and associated strategies (eg, Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy). Whānau Ora outcomes underpin the work of WOCA and the practice by which Ngā Tini Whetū is being delivered. Working through this complexity and the various data sets was critical.

11. Review materials were developed and a workshop held with WOCA/Agencies in August to test the approach. Soon after we submitted an evaluation application to Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust Ethics Committee.
12. Significant work was required at this stage to identify, contact and organise engagement and interviews with partner organisations and willing whānau participants. We intended to work alongside a total of six partners or one partner located in each region to capture lessons learnt in real-time as the prototype was implemented. While initial engagement with WOCA Partners in the six regions was intended to begin in October 2021, COVID-19 commitments were prioritised by these frontline providers – and rightly so. The evaluation approach was adjusted and the team met with partners at dates and times that worked best for them at different points in 2022.

Phase two – Experience of Ngā Tini Whetū

13. Core activity for this phase was to be on-site interviewing of regional NTW programme managers (6) and up to three frontline kaiārahi in each of the six regions (18) plus five whānau per region (30). The following table outlines the planned methods and frequency of engagements with the partners (programme managers and kaiārahi)

STAKEHOLDER	METHOD	FREQUENCY	NUMBERS
Partners – programme managers & kaiārahi	Hui and Interviews	Two-three visits - to be determined with WOCA	1 x programme manager and 3 x Kaiārahi <i>24 individuals in total</i>
Whānau	Interviews	Six month & 12 months	5 whānau per partner <i>30 whānau in total</i>

14. We intended to understand the different contexts and approaches taken in each region, learn from kaiārahi about their experience of the model and to discuss with whānau their perspectives on how they were engaged in to Ngā Tini Whetū, their initial objectives and how well the support they received is enabling them to progress towards their goals and aspirations.

COVID-19 delays

15. Due to the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, particularly in Tāmaki Makaurau, stakeholder interviews with WOCA, Partners and whānau were significantly delayed. For example, conversations with WOCA key informants were scheduled for completion in November 2021, however due to the redeployment of WOCA staff to support the Covid response in Tāmaki Makaurau, these interviews were completed in March 2022.
16. We completed remote interviews with three WOCA key informants, including the Research Director, Relationship and Engagement Director, and NTW Project Manager. We then had a remote group interview with five out of the six Relationship Engagement Coordinators (RECs). We also worked through WOCA’s Ngā Tini Whetū quarterly reports describing how Ngā Tini Whetū was operating across Te Ika a Māui and performing against measures.

17. The evaluation team’s approach, approved by the WOCA ethics committee, was to take guidance from WOCA in terms of when the Whānau Ora partner network might be ready to engage in the evaluation.
18. We initially aimed to interview the same 30 whānau (interviewed after six-months, approximately January 2022) at the twelve-month stage (approximately July/August 2022) in order to evaluate progress over time as a result of engaging in the service. However, the initial delays due to COVID-19 followed by concerns in early 2022 with resurgent COVID and flu infections changed this plan. We conducted one round of remote interviews with NTW regional programme managers, kaiārahi and whānau between May and June 2022. This was at the end of the year of engagement for whānau which made the original idea of revisiting them during the programme problematic. We pivoted and, through approaches to partners, were able to secure follow-up meetings with four whānau who had completed their Ngā Tini Whetū programme several months earlier.

Completed interviews by stakeholder type

Stakeholder	Interviews
Agency interviews	5
WOCA HQ	3
WOCA Regional coordinators	5
NTW Programme Managers	8
Kaiārahi	21
Whānau	28
Whānau (2 nd interviews)	4
TOTAL	74

19. While we had intended this to be a culturally appropriate immersion evaluation where we could build relationships kanohi ki te kanohi, this was a unique situation in which all had to prioritise health and safety. Ultimately, we felt the form of remote interviewing was well received and there were benefits for interviewees, including flexibility of location and time.

Phase three – Analysis

20. On completion of each group, hui or interview, our team debriefed about key reflections. We transcribed all interviews verbatim to ensure analysis was conducted with the highest level of specificity, detail, and completeness. Transcription also provides verbatim quotes for reporting.
21. The evaluation team held regular internal analysis hui to discuss emerging themes from the focus groups, hui and interviews. We identified and discussed cross-cutting themes with strong consensus (most common barriers and highest priorities). We also discussed any conflicting findings and identified why they occurred.

22. A preliminary topline findings report was provided in June 2022.

23. The core deliverable for the evaluation is the final report of achievements and potential outcomes of this prototype.

Appendix Two: Evaluation schedules

Evaluation of Ngā Tini Whetū: Information Sheet

What is the purpose of the evaluation? The purpose of the evaluation is to understand if the prototype has the right features and supports and is beginning to have an impact on whānau and tamariki wellbeing. This is a multi-agency initiative to resource a whānau-centred approach through the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA) in Te Ika a Maui. We want to know from whānau, WOCA partners, and government stakeholders how Ngā Tini Whetū is being experienced, in order to learn and improve the model where needed.

The evaluation will provide:

- an assessment of whether Ngā Tini Whetū is supporting whānau towards their outcomes and improving the nature of their perception of, and interactions with, government agencies
- insight to the impact of system settings and resourcing – as enablers or barriers
- observation and recommendations regarding the nature and effectiveness of the cross-agency collaboration and co-design with WOCA

Who is conducting the evaluation? The evaluation is being conducted by AIKO Consultants on behalf of ACC, Oranga Tamariki, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency. The lead evaluation team member is:

- Dr Chelsea Grootveld: Ngai Tai, Ngāti Porou, Whānau-a-Apanui, Whakatōhea
chelsea.grootveld@gmail.com - 021 911 854.

How is information being gathered? Information will be gathered through small hui or semi structured interviews, as appropriate. There will be up to 62 individuals approached for this evaluation, including:

- Agency and WOCA stakeholders (approx. 8) in Wellington or Auckland during the planning phase
- Up to 24 individuals from WOCA partner organisations and Kaiārahi working directly with whānau on Ngā Tini Whetū who will be engaged regularly throughout the two-year evaluation
- Approximately 30 members of whānau engaged in the Ngā Tini Whetū programme willing to be interviewed at the 6-month and 12-month stages.

How will information be stored and used?

- Client data is stored securely on OneDrive and SharePoint in the Cloud.
 - All notes, transcripts, audios, videos and consent forms are in password protected folders and are anonymised.
 - All client supplied lists (e.g., names, contact details and other personal information) are password protected and deleted once the data has been used for the purposes for which it was provided
 - Data access is limited to current employees.
 - Aiko password protects all sensitive data such as contact lists, and other data when requested by clients.
 - At project completion electronic participant contact lists are removed from our system and paper copies are destroyed within a month of project completion. All remaining data such as interview audios and transcripts are moved to a password protected folder of completed projects. This password is only known by current employees and only shared with staff verbally.
 - Five years after project completion all remaining project files are deleted except the final report and ethics information.
-

What are the benefits of this evaluation to whānau? This is a learn and grow evaluation by Kaupapa Māori specialists. Throughout the two-year evaluation, the team will be observing and reporting areas for change to benefit whānau engaged in the programme and any improvements needed to sustain the initiative. The final report will help determine if this approach is working for whānau Māori especially, and why. It will help advise the three government agencies for future resourcing decisions for whānau and may also help inform other government agencies about the efficacy of whānau-centred approaches cross-agency collaborations.

What are my rights? It is your choice whether or not you wish to take part in the evaluation. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to give a reason. Only the evaluation team will know who (Partners and whānau) has been approached to participate and this will not be shared with the commissioning government agencies or WOCA.

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

Who do I contact with questions or concerns? If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the evaluation team members.

Evaluation of Ngā Tini Whetū: Consent Form

I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time.
- If I do take part, I can refuse to answer any questions I do not want to answer.
- My name or identifying information will not be included in the evaluation without my permission. If I work for an organisation, the type of organisation I work for may be identified.
- My relationship with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA), Oranga Tamariki, ACC and/or Te Puni Kōkiri (the Agencies) will not be affected through my participation.
- My participation will not impact any future procurement decisions.
- With my permission, the discussion will be audio recorded, and may be transcribed.
- I have the right to request a copy of the audio or transcript of my discussion.
- Digital recordings, notes, and summaries will be stored securely at Aiko. Hard copies of stored information will be destroyed after three years.
- My information will not be shared with anyone outside of Aiko. WOCA/Agencies may request my notes in exceptional circumstances. If so, these notes will not include any identifying information and will be securely stored by the Research and Evaluation Team.
- Any information I provide can be removed at my request up until [date] of [month] 2022.

I have read the information sheet and consent form and been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this evaluation.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix Three: Agency long-term objectives

To increase the number of vulnerable whānau that are cohesive, resilient, and nurturing.

This means providing supports and services that can help and empower parents/caregivers/whānau to build skills and strategies to nurture, care and provide for their tamariki. Where necessary, whānau are supported to address the causes of violence, addiction, substance abuse, and risk of self-harm through increased uptake of high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate support services. In doing so, such an approach will increase the number of tamariki from vulnerable whānau who have positive educational experiences, ensure relationships between partners are strong and supportive, and enable whānau to create environments that provide for their physical, emotional, spiritual and mental wellbeing.

To address the circumstances that lead to concerns about tamariki wellbeing being reported to Oranga Tamariki, reduce the number of tamariki and rangatahi needing a response from care and protection or youth justice, and/or ways the care and protection system or youth justice responses could be improved.

We are seeking to increase the wellbeing of a range of whānau and tamariki through a variety of ways, which may include, young mums supporting tamariki from maternity through the early years, whānau where there has been a family violence notification, whānau with young tamariki that have identified reports of concern, whānau with tamariki at risk of offending, rangatahi transitioning out of care or youth justice, parents and whānau who have had a child removed from their care. Identifying whānau needing or wanting support will be a key aspect of the co-design process with providers. The categories relate to analysis, not recruitment, and will depend on need.

To improve injury and harm prevention, as well as access to ACC services, experience and outcomes for whānau Māori.

ACC's injury prevention strategy stresses a greater focus on the life course and strengthening whānau protective and resilience factors that address social determinants of injury. Mātauranga Māori is a key protective function and determinant of success for improving meaningful outcomes for Māori. In partnership, we want to explore and evaluate what is needed so that Whānau Ora and mātauranga Māori practice can address the causes, and therefore strengthen prevention, of injury and harm across a range of often inter-related areas including sexual and family violence, self-harm, home safety and alcohol related injury

Appendix Four: Evaluation sub-questions & summarised findings

Evaluation area	Questions /areas to explore
<p>Whānau Ora commissioning to support whānau achieve outcomes: effectiveness of resourcing and inter-agency collaboration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent is the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype receiving the right level of government resourcing to support kaiārahi in meeting the high and often complex needs of whānau? 2. How are the agencies communicating with each other on this work? How is information being shared at all levels, particularly between state agencies, WOCA and partners? 3. Are agencies working differently for Ngā Tini Whetū to overcome barriers to engagement with whānau? How? 4. Are there specific needs or issues for which this approach seems to be working well or encountering difficulties?
<p>System settings and levers (including funding mechanisms): supporting better relations between government and whānau, and better results</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How can we measure the effectiveness of this connection and relationship? (an effective inter-agency relationship is only useful if the outcomes it delivers will specifically meet the needs and aspirations of whānau.) 6. What supports are needed for this level of integration to work effectively? 7. How effectively can the current funding mechanisms, and/or what changes need to be made, support collective action by government agencies? 8. How is Ngā Tini Whetū currently supporting Kaupapa Māori approaches and what system changes can be made to increase support? 9. What, if any are the enablers and barriers to collective and local investment approaches?
<p>Pathways to outcomes: assessing progress and potential for long-term impact as a result of this approach</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. What resources or support do whānau say they want and need, at different stages in this process, including child-specific aspirations or needs, and why? 11. What has been the whānau experience of this engagement to date? 12. In what ways and how well is Ngā Tini Whetū strengthening whānau protective and resilience factors? 13. Is there a reduction in need for referral to statutory agencies, and/or do whānau feel more comfortable engaging with statutory agencies they may be referred to and optimistic about achieving their outcomes? 14. What do whānau and those working directly with whānau see as the potential in this programme over the longer term? What changes are required in order to see this growth?

Summarised findings to sub-questions

Evaluation questions	Finding summary
Whānau Ora commissioning to support whānau to achieve outcomes: effectiveness of resourcing and inter-agency collaboration	
<p>To what extent is the Ngā Tini Whetū prototype receiving the right level of government resourcing to support kaiārahi in meeting the high and often complex needs of whānau?</p>	<p>Kaiārahi workload and resourcing appear set at the right level but note they work after hours and weekends to build trust and connect with whānau. They were humble and dedicated to whānau.</p> <p>Key attributes to be an effective kaiārahi include holding a Māori worldview, sharing whakapapa or local knowledge, being strengths-focused and non-judgemental, a relentless advocate, having compassion, empathy and are able to work in flourishing space.</p> <p>Kaiārahi with experience of government systems, local resources and networks are most beneficial for whānau accessing entitlements and smart use of resources. If they have the attributes but not the system experience, connect with a mentor and establish info-sharing site.</p>
<p>How are the agencies communicating with each other on this work? How is information being shared at all levels, particularly between state agencies, WOCA and partners?</p> <p>Are agencies working differently for Ngā Tini Whetū to overcome barriers to engagement with whānau? How?</p>	<p>There was generally low awareness of Ngā Tini Whetū and little engagement between participating agencies and partner organisations in regions, except in isolated cases where engagement was positive for whānau because agencies worked closely with Māori provider. Strategy or communication from Wellington may have been impacted by project personnel turnover, consistent challenge of competing agency priorities.</p> <p>We observed benefits to whānau and kaiārahi as a result of ACC involvement with many kaiārahi consciously addressing health, safety and injury prevention with whānau. Closer working with Māori providers by Oranga Tamariki or as intermediary positive for whānau and improved perception of agency. Negligible impact (so far) on whānau perspectives of government agencies; high mistrust exists, some intergenerational trauma. Whānau relationship is with the Kaiārahi and the Provider.</p>
<p>Are there specific needs or issues for which this approach seems to be working well or encountering difficulties?</p>	<p>Wide range of issues and this approach works well because there are not a narrow, well-defined set. Whānau ora demands a holistic strengths-based approach. While specific “agency outcomes” might not be directly visible, the strengthening of whānau (i.e., decreasing stress levels by minimizing debt) and building whānau protective factors (access to warm, dry affordable housing - security; is significant.</p>
System settings and levers (including funding mechanisms): supporting better relations between government and whānau, and better results	
<p>How can we measure the effectiveness of this connection and relationship? (an effective inter-agency relationship is only useful if the outcomes it delivers will specifically meet the needs and aspirations of whānau.)</p>	<p>Ngā Tini Whetū represents a bold, new step for government agencies in co-funding Whānau Ora-led delivery of services, but Whānau Ora is already a proven model with Māori and this prototype adds evidence that devolution to whānau-centred approaches works. WOCA’s data says whānau are achieving positive outcomes and whānau confirmed through this evaluation that their needs and aspirations were supported; they had much improved resources and outlook. Government can trust the evidence and put greater faith in the Whānau Ora outcomes to measure whānau results and effectiveness of working with organisations like WOCA.</p> <p>Agencies’ interests are too narrow and do not reflect the needs of whānau, particularly when carrying risk factors. Merging funding and trusting in Whānau Ora outcomes will effect system change to the benefit of whānau Māori.</p>

	The factors between agencies that made this prototype work in this case were a particularly motivated Minister (Oranga Tamariki under pressure to work differently for Māori) and brave leadership. Challenging this has been a lack of continuity and personnel changes in agencies, and little understanding about the Kaupapa in regional offices.
What supports are needed for this level of integration to work effectively?	Trust in the WOCA reporting data and insights which exceeds reporting expectations and periodically invest in external evaluations. Agencies benefit from letting go of frontline implementation control. If whānau are supported to build their protective factors and achieve their aspirations – in ways determined by them – if they are healthy, safe, connected, have purpose, have an economic base, they will thrive – which means less engagement with agencies like ACC and Oranga Tamariki but also others.
How effectively can the current funding mechanisms, and/or what changes need to be made, support collective action by government agencies?	Very effective for whānau, continue to find ways to pool your funding more easily. This should be the responsibility of the Public Service Commission and Treasury to update funding mechanisms and ensure there are practical levers in place to support the 2020 reforms. In the short-term absence of these mechanisms, divert funding to TPK and maintain leadership level group (officials) to continue monitoring effectiveness, gather learnings, apply to other parts of your business and share wider.
How is Ngā Tini Whetū currently supporting Kaupapa Māori approaches and what system changes can be made to increase support?	The Ngā Tini Whetū prototype was delivered by Māori, so it is innately supporting Kaupapa Māori approaches. This was critical to attract and engage whānau on this programme. System changes could be around enabling Māori providers to work directly with whānau by protecting their staffing resource and applying longer-term contracts. Discretionary funding helps to clear barriers and make connections between services and appears to be value for money.
What, if any are the enablers and barriers to collective and local investment approaches?	Agencies interests and activities are siloed which inhibits a holistic approach. Enablers include good level of investment in kaiārahi and flexible funding to target need delivered through whānau-centred support; leadership at senior agency level to influence, lead and drive a different way of working; Ministerial support; WOCA's kaupapa Māori investment agency and established network of Whānau Ora partners (providers in regions) Barriers include public service funding mechanisms; siloed and competing agency priorities; level of readiness of agencies to engage in strength-based ways of working and understanding of what Whānau Ora means in practice; deficit approach and monitoring system.
Pathways to outcomes: assessing progress and potential for long-term impact as a result of this approach	
What resources or support do whānau say they want and need, at different stages in this process, including child-specific aspirations or needs, and why?	It varies so provider and funding need to be prepared to respond in different ways. Initial scepticism about public service and receiving genuine support to be overcome, made accessible by Kaupapa Māori provider in front. Needed intensive period upfront for whakawhanaungatanga, nothing can happen until trust is built. Compassion, listening, identify and address barriers, identify dreams, develop plan together but led by whānau; step back, they lead but be there, offer advice and create connections and open up services to them. Supporting the parents supports the children; whānau know what their children want and want to be able to provide it. Never sign them off and say the contract is over, leave the door open.
What has been the whānau experience of this engagement to date?	Overwhelmingly positive. All whānau we interviewed were grateful for the personal support they had received, the relationships they had made, the skills gained. Many called it life-changing because of the approach based on their strengths and aspirations which

	<p>they felt able to give life to; a dramatic change in outlook, hope for the future. Kaiārahi (representing over 200 whānau) were equally positive about the difference in this programme by being able to work closely with a few whānau each on their aspirations, not crisis.</p>
<p>In what ways and how well is Ngā Tini Whetū strengthening whānau protective and resilience factors?</p>	<p>A spectrum of whānau needs and aspirations supported and achieved. Whānau attaining degrees, starting businesses, relocating homes onto papakāinga, gaining employment and drivers licensing, accessing alcohol and other drug counselling and parenting courses, securing custody of babies and children, accessing transport and dry homes, minimising debt and reducing stress. Listening by trusted kaiārahi and tools (planning, skill development) to guide whānau towards their aspirations saw protective factors strengthened and overall greater resilience developed.</p>
<p>Is there a reduction in need for referral to statutory agencies, and/or do whānau feel more comfortable engaging with statutory agencies they may be referred to and optimistic about achieving their outcomes?</p>	<p>Too early to say but positive indicators of whānau flourishing – children retained in the whānau supported by kaiārahi; housing issues addressed proactively (e.g., Multiple windows fixed in house with several children); adults off benefit and in employment or self-employment; vehicle purchase to transport kids to kura, childcare, family outings. Much greater optimism among whānau about their future and being self-reliant.</p> <p>High mistrust and ill-feeling dealing with statutory agencies (e.g., feeling judged, not listened to). Whānau shared feeling much more at ease working with Māori partner organisation (“relatable”, kind, familiar), but potential for improvement in perception of statutory agencies when seen to be working together with Māori provider in positive way for whānau.</p>
<p>What do whānau and those working directly with whānau see as the potential in this programme over the longer term? What changes are required in order to see this growth?</p>	<p>Whānau and kaiārahi see great potential in this programme (“shouldn’t be working in any other way”) because it focuses on whānau flourishing and everything you need to support that gets addressed along the way (including clearing barriers like debt, building hope, coping and parenting skills, motivation). It is relatively low cost and because it centres on the whānau it has the potential to influence countless adults, tamariki, rangatahi, friends - a ripple effect by enabling the core strength already there in the whānau.</p> <p>Changes to support growth include increasing central agency comfort with devolving delivery to Māori providers and acknowledging they have robust systems and reporting in place already; helping these providers retain their Māori staff; longer-term contracts to help their planning; building agency understanding of Kaupapa Māori approaches so that staff work well and flexibly with these providers to support whānau outcomes.</p>