Whānau ora: report of the Taskforce on Whānau centred initiatives

Whānau ora is about 'wellness, health and resilience'

Background

In June 2009, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Whānau Ora Taskforce (the Taskforce), with appointed members including Professor Mason Durie (Chair), Rob Cooper, Suzanne Snively, Di Grennell, and Nancy Tuaine.

The Taskforce was guided by terms of reference which set out a range of expected activities including to develop an evidence based framework for whānau centred services delivery with the aim of:

- strengthening whānau capabilities;
- integrated approach to whānau wellbeing;
- collaborative relationships between state agencies in relation to whānau services;
- ensuring relationships between government and communities agencies that are broader than contractual; and
- improving cost effectiveness and value for money.

A Whānau ora centred initiative discussion document was released in November 2009. Members of the Taskforce presented at 22 consultation hui for a wide audience of urban and rural whānau, iwi and service providers during October and November 2009 with attendance numbers around 600 people. Written submissions (100) were also received with similar common themes reflected including the need for Whānau ora to demonstrate a 'Māori heart', ensure local representation in decision making, minimal bureaucracy, sustainability and adequate resourcing, a research and evaluation component, and quality relationships between whānau, providers and iwi.

In February 2010 the Whānau ora report was presented to Minister Turia, with public release of this document on 8 April 2010.

The Whānau ora Framework

What is Whānau Ora?

The Taskforce recognises the dynamic nature of whānau, the need for a future focused approach to whānau wellbeing, and an equal need to take an adaptive approach to whānau interventions. Whānau Ora is about ‘wellness, health and resilience’ with an inclusive approach to providing services and opportunities to families across New Zealand.

The whānau centred framework’s overall aim is 'best outcomes for whānau' and contains five domains of whānau impact: aspiration aims, principles, goals, services, and an independent whānau ora trust. NB: the trust has been vetoed by government, i.e. government run.

Whānau ora is defined in the document “a multi-generational collective made up of many households that are supported and strengthened by a wider network of relatives”. It aims to empower families as a whole, rather than focusing separately on individual family members and their problems. Government agencies will also be required to work collectively with family members rather than focusing on individual family members.
The framework includes six key recommendations for implementation:

- establishing an independent trust be constituted to govern, coordinate and implement Whānau ora, and report to a dedicated Minister of Whānau ora;
- establishing a specific whānau ora appropriation to be managed by the Trust;
- ensuring Whānau ora services are integrated and comprehensive, and focused on measurable outcomes that will contribute to whānau ora empowerment;
- ensuring whānau ora services are shaped by te ao Māori;
- ensuring that all government agencies with responsibilities for any aspect of whānau wellbeing commit to the Whānau ora principles and support the whānau ora approach; and
- establishing regional panels (8 to 10) to ensure Whānau ora contributes in positive and realistic way in local communities.

Implementation of Whānau ora framework

The implementation of the key recommendations of the whānau ora framework has occurred in quick succession since the release on the 8 April 2010. The Whānau ora trust has been established as an independent, stable, transparent foundation to govern, coordinate and implement whānau ora. Tariana Turia is the newly appointed Whānau ora Minister, who will control and be accountable for the fund.

Governance group

A governance group has been established to ensure that funds contribute directly to whānau wellbeing, that funds are allocated in a fair and transparent manner and contractual arrangements conform to ethical and business standards. Members include the three government agency chief executives; Leith Comer, Peter Hughes, Stephen McKernan along with three members of the Taskforce, Rob Cooper (Chair), Professor Sir Mason Durie, Nancy Tuaine.

Funding appropriation

The Taskforce has proposed dedicated resources to administer whānau centred service delivery, and a combination of appropriated funding from existing votes such as health, social development, Justice and education. It is unlikely that Whānau ora appropriations will be voted from new money.

Future announcements regarding financials will be available after the budget, with announcements of new Chief Executive expected prior to the trust becoming operational at 1 July 2010. A further staged approach to full implementation of the framework, will allow for capacity and capability of whānau, providers and government agencies to be further developed. This will include:

- a relational approach to contracting, through single, outcomes focused, cross sector contracts;
- resourcing of the infrastructure required to carry out the trust work programme for 2010/11;
- further development of monitoring and evaluation measures; and
participatory action research.

Measurement of outcomes at whānau, provider and population levels will constitute an integral part of the ongoing implementation of whānau ora and will inform funding decisions.

The Taskforce recommends that the main goal for Whānau Ora providers and practitioners should be to make substantial contributions to whānau outcomes by:

- delivering integrated and coherent services;
- increasing gains for individuals and the whānau as a whole; and
- demonstrating high levels of expertise in whānau interventions.

What will these changes mean for us?

NZNO needs to keep a watching brief of the implementation process for the Whānau ora trust including:

- allocation of funding to address pay inequalities for Māori and Iwi health providers – opportunities to profile Te Rau Kōkiri campaign;
- confirmation of the new vote money in the May budget 2010;
- reallocation of resources from other areas to the Whānau ora trust;
- changes to contracting processes for providers and in the accountability schedules;
- introduction of whānau ora practitioner and what this role entails;
- opportunity for NZNO members to be involved at decision making on regional panel level;
- process for selecting and contracting the first 20 Whānau ora providers; and
- evaluation and review process for an independent trust.

Questions arising?

- Do we need to talk to legal about the role of an independent trust which manages public funded money?
- How does the whānau ora trust fit with the National Māori Coalition expression of interest for primary health care whānau ora proposal?