



# Summary

## *How well public organisations are supporting Whānau Ora and whānau-centred approaches*

Whānau Ora comprises a group of whānau-centred initiatives, including the Whānau Ora commissioning approach, that put whānau at the centre of decision-making about their well-being and aspirations. The Whānau Ora commissioning approach involves Te Puni Kōkiri contracting three commissioning agencies to invest in whānau-centred services throughout the country. Providers of these services work with whānau and support them to achieve their goals.

In 2018, the Minister for Whānau Ora commissioned a review that found Whānau Ora creates positive change for whānau and creates the conditions for that change to be sustainable.

However, since Whānau Ora was introduced, concerns have been consistently raised about how well public organisations are understanding, supporting, and learning from it. There have also been concerns about whether public organisations have adapted their systems and processes to enable whānau-centred ways of working (for example, by changing their funding, contracting, and reporting requirements).

In 2019, the Minister for Whānau Ora advised Cabinet that he wanted to grow whānau-centred approaches to policy development and service delivery and increase public organisations' investment in Whānau Ora. Te Puni Kōkiri is the department responsible for Whānau Ora and now has a strategic focus area reflecting these aims.

We wanted to know what progress Te Puni Kōkiri and other public organisations have made in supporting and implementing Whānau Ora and whānau-centred approaches more generally.

### **What we found**

Some public organisations have taken steps towards supporting and implementing whānau-centred approaches. However, much of this work involves trialling small-scale and time-limited initiatives. Overall, we did not see a significant shift, nor did we see systematic consideration of where and when whānau-centred approaches would be appropriate.

This means that many whānau might not be getting all the support available to address their needs



and help them achieve their aspirations. Public organisations need to do more to support and implement whānau-centred approaches, including Whānau Ora.

Public sector processes and practices need to change to create a more enabling environment to implement these types of approaches where they are appropriate. There is work under way that indicates public organisations are intending to address some of these issues.

There should also be a stronger mandate for Te Puni Kōkiri and clearer expectations for public organisations. The lack of clear expectations for public organisations and the barriers created by some public sector processes and practices are the main reasons why Te Puni Kōkiri has made limited progress on its strategic focus area of expanding the use of whānau-centred approaches by public organisations.

Te Puni Kōkiri should prioritise completing its work to improve its ability to measure and report on impacts from Whānau Ora and its contribution to improved whānau outcomes. It should also make monitoring, research, and evaluation information on Whānau Ora and whānau-centred approaches more accessible to public organisations and others.

We acknowledge that it can be challenging to change public sector norms and conventions. This can even be the case when there is consensus that significant changes are needed and, if implemented effectively, will likely make a difference in outcomes for whānau. We have made recommendations that are intended to support the public service to broaden its understanding and development of approaches that give whānau the ability to achieve their aspirations and live well.