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**demand
& supply**

evidence

capability

**role of
science**

ministers

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WHEN POLICY FOLLOWS THE SCIENCE • LESSONS FROM COVID

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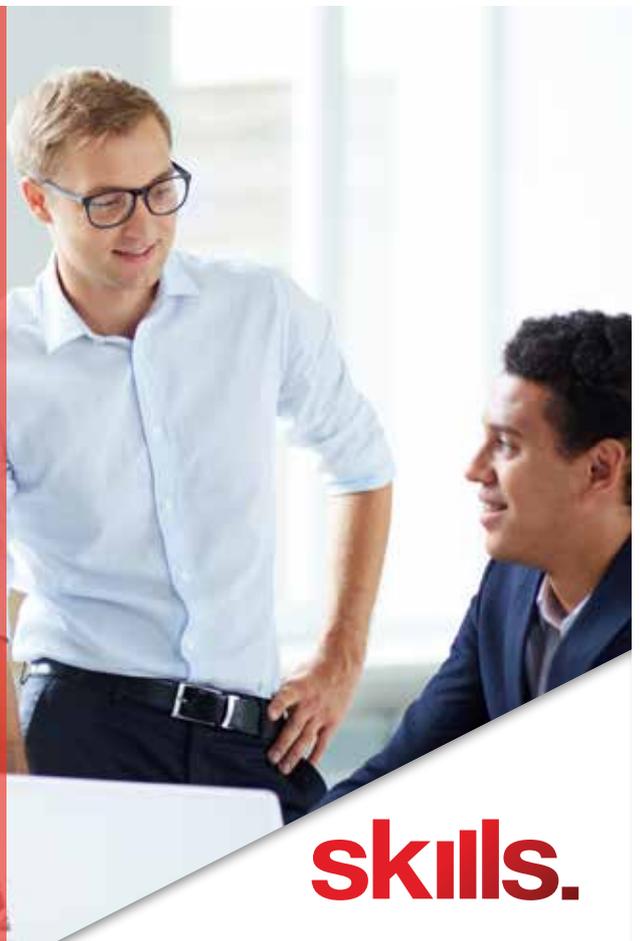
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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SHENAGH GLEISNER

The foundations are there. The Public Service Act shifted the dial, set the tone, offered a springboard. It provided the beginnings of what may be profound change. But good foundations and promising beginnings have trumpeted transformational change many times in the public service. Enabling legislative frameworks, new initiatives, and fresh advisory groups proliferate, but few things change unless there is relentless urgency to implement what is promised.

I have received feedback from respected and capable leaders from outside government who worry that the public sector will not really change; indeed, they assert that it does not want to fundamentally change. Agencies restructure and people churn from one organisation to another, making long-term partnerships difficult. Great ideas from outside are stopped in their tracks. People see so many great initiatives championed by wonderful public servants. But they see less mainstreaming of all of this excellence, so that the system itself rarely shifts at its core.

The seismic shock that was COVID pushed many public servants out of their comfort zones and released a productive, collaborative capacity and an agility that could not have been imagined before. It illustrated the strengths of top down and bottom up, with science, evidence, and rapid centralised decision making at one end and devolved power with decision rights to community groups at the other. A unified public service is not a one-size-fits-all service.

COVID facilitated a dramatic demonstration of community capability. Māori were reachable through Māori channels, which had never been achieved before by the public service. It must have opened public servants' eyes to entirely new models of service delivery. How radically changed are our service delivery models? In fact, perhaps service delivery is the wrong term. More a partnership with people who have the lived experience, supporting capability building and engaging in building active citizenship. Can this transformation, especially for Māori, be accelerated through system change?

IPANZ is an independent voice and highly committed to championing the public administration system and supporting its members – public servants. IPANZ has been described as a critical friend. But as I depart, I wish I had found a way to bring a stronger impetus for systemic transformation from all that I have heard from outside, and often from within, the public service. The comments I have heard are not intended to undermine public servants, although they can be critical. They are intended to shine a light on the potential for doing so much better, and this can release the creativity of public servants – creating an authorising environment that encourages risk taking and rewards innovation.

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WHEN POLICY FOLLOWS THE SCIENCE



Dr Paula Martin

Since the pandemic struck, science has been unusually prominent in decision making. Dr Paula Martin, policy and research professional and former senior public sector manager, investigates how this came about and what it might say about policy and decision making in the future.

One of the features of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the role of science, with many governments talking about “following the science”. This seems like an astonishing example of evidence-based policy advice – and many are keen to capture lessons for the future.

I spoke with a few of the policy and scientific advisors involved, including Professor Juliet Gerrard (Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor) and Professor Ian Town (Chief Science Advisor, Ministry of Health), to get their thoughts.

Reflections on following the science in the pandemic

What does following the science mean?

There is not necessarily a single view. Town says:

“Almost all knowledge is incremental, evidence is overlaid, tested, and challenged – this is widely understood by scientists but poorly understood by the public.”

The impression may have been of a direct relationship between scientific evidence and policy decisions, but this was not the reality, with one person noting:

“Evidence is important but it doesn’t solve all your problems. Science doesn’t tell you what to do. You still have to turn it into policy options and advice.”

This is the case in all policy situations, and many commentators have discussed the limitations of what science can, and should do, in policy making. Some have also argued that the phrase has been used to highlight that difficult and controversial decisions are based on evidence, and is part of a highly politicised environment.

Following the science, then, is not a straightforward description of how evidence was used during the pandemic. Gerrard says:

“Following the science is just a short hand for a whole lot of things, but the main thing for me is making sure all the evidence is at the decision-makers’ table.”

The context

While following the science may not be straightforward, it is true that science and scientists were prominent in the pandemic response.

From the beginning, there was an extreme sense of urgency and considerable uncertainty about the nature of the virus, the potential threat it posed, and the lack of a vaccine. Internationally scientists were racing to find out about it. Gerrard notes that this lack of knowledge made it imperative to act quickly:

“We knew so little about this virus or what it might do. The way the international science community responded was phenomenal.”

This put science to the fore around the world. This international focus on trying to address “the world’s biggest problem” meant, according to one policy analyst, that there was soon a “super science-rich environment. What we knew grew every day.”

Another advisor recalled that, from the beginning, a science view was central. They also noted, however, that it quickly became clear that this would have wide implications:

“We had a sense early on that this thing was big and had so many tentacles; we had to start thinking from the beginning about the economic impacts, the social supports people would need, the legal and Bill of Rights issues. Science was the most certain information we had – but then our task was to pull together all those different views.”

Several people mentioned the significance of the clarity of the policy goal. The overriding goal was saving lives and eliminating the virus. This simplified things because an elimination strategy meant some of the trade-offs had already been made. This changed over time, as Gerrard noted:

“When you are dealing with a new virus and following an elimination strategy, science will by definition have a prominent role. As the pandemic morphs into a more run-of-the-mill virus, science will play less of a role because we already understand the virus.”

Another advisor agreed that there was a change over time as policy goals shifted but suggested that science wasn't being used less:

“The nature of debate has shifted. We can afford to think differently because with vaccines and knowing more, we are able to balance all those factors differently. I don't think science is being used any less ... but it's shifted as time has gone on.”

EVIDENCE IS IMPORTANT BUT IT DOESN'T SOLVE ALL YOUR PROBLEMS.

The final contextual factor is who is receiving the advice. The prime minister was “deeply interested in and committed to the science” and made frequent use of her Chief Science Advisor (CSA) to explain the science.

This contrasted with some other jurisdictions:

“A lesson for me was that demand will blow in the wind depending on who's in charge.”

The context – the urgency and uncertainty, the clear policy goal, and the receiving environment – underpinned the prominence of science in the response.

Implications for future evidence-based policy

Can we continue the commitment to science shown during this crisis?

Gerrard says, “The whole science community is asking how science can keep being valued in policy.” Likewise, one policy advisor commented that it has felt “easier to integrate science” than in many situations and is reflecting on what can be done to continue this.

It may be that the context of the pandemic was so unique that any lessons are not transferable to other situations. Nevertheless, there are potential implications.

Scientists working in the policy world and in public

The pandemic brought many scientists into the policy world and into the wider public domain. Science communicators played a prominent role. One person said, “We fared better in New Zealand in terms of trust in science because we are small and tight knit, but we also had a team of people who stepped up to communicate.” The ability to communicate science simply and clearly is increasingly being seen as a valuable skill for scientists.

It's clear, though, that many scientists are not familiar with policy processes. Gerrard notes: “Even some of the more senior academics haven't really distinguished between say, the Cabinet's view, the Office of the Prime Minister's view, and the Director-General's view.” She points out that attention is being given to

how to familiarise scientists with the policy world, for example, through internships and secondments for science students. The CSAs can play a valuable role at this interface.

For scientists, there are pros and cons to being in the public realm. For example, overseas there has been commentary on the blurring of boundaries and a perceived loss of independence, particularly when scientists are used to justify unpopular decisions. Here too, Gerrard notes the challenges:

“We were all on that tightrope ... It put huge pressure on people who had to communicate both to the Cabinet and to the public ... how you maintain your integrity and independence is absolutely critical. I think for the most part, people have done that pretty well.”

Everyone emphasised that science was never the only input to decision making – multiple perspectives and interests were involved. This may not always be understood or accepted, and one person commented that accepting that your advice will not always be followed is one of the core skills needed among those who advise governments.

Culture and ways of working

People spoke about the importance of valuing and respecting what others bring, being willing to seek others out for input, and being willing to work together.

For science, Gerrard feels one of the biggest shifts needed is a cultural one:

“There's something about the culture of science; we need to shift much more to a service culture. By that I mean having an attitude of “How can I help you with this problem? How can I help you frame this question?” rather than just turning up and presenting what you think the problems are.”

Within the policy world, the importance of attitudes, values, and culture were also highlighted. The COVID response has forced new ways of working, and many interviewees hope that this change can continue. One example was the close collaboration across functional boundaries – policy, scientists, operations, research, and communications – which should become standard practice:

“Here we had no choice because of the pace, so everyone was working together in real time. It's about the attitude you bring. I think this a more general point about how we should work.”

Technology played a huge role. Not being able to meet in person had its downsides, but using Zoom meant that it was possible to bring many different people together:

“We were able to get a broad range of scientists, the CSAs, and policy advisors into meetings with the prime minister and ministers. And that meant they could ask questions of the experts. Given the magnitude of the decisions, that's a good thing.”

One of the key ways science advice was obtained was through directly engaging with people who could help, which was co-ordinated by Gerrard and Town:

“We just set up a phone line where people could contact us. It quickly became apparent who could help, and we then connected them to the prime minister and the policy advisors ... What I have learned most was the value of being able to connect the right people.”

Relationships and trust between science advisors and policy advisors were critical. Gerrard recalls working closely with the head of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet:

“He understood how government worked, and I understood how science worked, and that relationship was critical for me to understand the policy process and position.”

Doing good policy involves bringing multiple perspectives and types of information together, while retaining an ability to challenge and question each other.

Formal processes and institutions for integrating science into policy

It quickly became apparent that existing plans and structures were often not fit for purpose. In particular, several advisory groups needed to be quickly revamped or new ones established. Existing core institutions were also able to be utilised, such as ESR and Medsafe.

Gerrard and Town referred to Sir Peter Gluckman’s earlier examination of overseas systems and processes, including New Zealand’s lack of a specific committee for providing science advice, such as SAGE in the United Kingdom. However, interviewees were unsure about how this had worked in practice:

“SAGE has been held up as an exemplar ... but places that had structures in place didn’t get the same results that we got ... the people receiving the advice didn’t seem to be using it. So just having the structures doesn’t guarantee the outcome.”

Chief Science Advisor roles were established some years ago. The pandemic response has highlighted the value of these positions. Continuing to build a resilient network of science advisors is likely to be a priority for Gerrard:

“Having a resilient network of CSAs across departments is really important ... and building a culture in departments where people are used to going to scientists for advice.”

MANY SCIENTISTS ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH POLICY PROCESSES.

The value of the CSAs was also highlighted by one of the policy advisors:

“The CSA network has always felt a bit out to the side, rather than at the centre of policy making, which is where it should be. I think COVID has shifted some of the dynamics of this.”

The Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security Co-ordination (ODESC) plays a key role in emergency response, and it was noted that scientists had recently become more formally involved, with Gerrard becoming part of ODESC during the Whakaari White Island crisis. This model provided a foundation for ensuring science advice was prominent in emergency responses and meant the CSAs had gained important experience about working in policy processes during emergencies.

While formal processes may not guarantee science will be listened to, having existing core infrastructure in place for obtaining scientific advice was beneficial.

Policy analyst skills and competencies

Gluckman has previously commented on the lack of people in the policy world with advanced research degrees, and the lack of policy analysts with science degrees was mentioned in this context as well. Gerrard agrees there might be scope for improving this, such as clearer career pathways into policy roles for science graduates.

Other approaches are to ensure all policy analysts have a core level of skill to use data and other evidence, as well as being able to work effectively with technical specialists. This may vary depending on the sector or agency, but at a minimum, we should consider how well analysts are equipped to work with information considering it is the central input to policy analysis.

RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST BETWEEN SCIENCE ADVISORS AND POLICY ADVISORS WERE CRITICAL.

A key question for the policy profession is whether we have the workforce who can engage critically with multiple streams of evidence, interrogate it, interpret it, and integrate it with other inputs to provide robust advice to decision makers.

Public sector leaders’ commitment to evidence-based policy

It is the job of the public service to provide robust advice, which means it must be based on evidence. One of the most challenging areas is in the demand for evidence-based advice by decision makers. The commitment of New Zealand’s political leaders to using evidence during the pandemic was high, which contributed to a favourable environment for integrating science into policy and decisions.

For the public service, this raises the question of how to keep an ongoing commitment to evidence-based policy when conditions might not be so favourable. This is central to the public service’s stewardship role, with requirements on chief executives being strengthened recently in the Public Service Act.

This is a critical issue for public service leaders and the policy profession. There are well-known challenges, such as when resources or incentives are not aligned, but evidence-based policy requires ongoing leadership commitment.

At least one agency is already thinking about this. Town notes that:

“We are very ambitious that what we’ve learned from this becomes fundamental to the culture and values of the new Ministry of Health. We need to be stewards of a system to drive policy that feels like this case study, that replicates the learning, the discipline, the need for investment in top people and science networks and has questioning and an ability to challenge thinking – this is what a true public service should look like.”

Final thoughts

It is clear that a unique set of contextual factors contributed to the unusually prominent role of science in the pandemic. There is also a bigger context (not discussed here) about the production of knowledge and support for rigorous and robust science, relating to science policy, commissioning, funding, and other institutional settings – and how to fill critical gaps especially in the evaluation of public policies and programmes. The wider societal context of trust in science, scientific literacy, dealing with different views, and disinformation is also relevant.

This article has highlighted some areas for exploration about how to embed the experiences of the pandemic into ongoing evidence-based policy. I hope that the commitment seen to using evidence to inform advice and decisions during the pandemic will continue.

THE “DEMAND SIDE” – HELPING MINISTERS TO BE INTELLIGENT CUSTOMERS OF POLICY SERVICES



Sally Washington

A recent IPANZ/Productivity Commission round table concluded that public servants should be more courageous in their advice to ministers and more leadership was required. Sally Washington, Australia NZ School of Government (ANZSOG) Executive Director Aotearoa, unpicks the dimensions of great relationships between ministers and their departments. IPANZ and ANZSOG intend future collaboration to explore issues at the political-administrative interface.

Improving the quality of policy advice is on the agenda of many organisations and jurisdictions. Aotearoa’s Policy Project and the United Kingdom’s Head of the Policy Profession unit are well established agents for building policy capability. But most jurisdictions have focused on the “supply side” of the good policy equation. Few, if any, have done any complementary work on the “demand side” of the ledger – on ministers and how they can get the best

policy advice and support improvements in public service policy capability.

Good government decision making depends on great relationships between ministers and their departments. Often ministers come into the role thinking they need to have all the answers, when in fact, they really need to have the right questions. Confident ministers invite free and frank advice and are open to challenge. Great ministers are skilled at getting the most out of policy services. So how do they do that, and how might officials work with them to that end?

The policy pre-nup

The start of any relationship is a good time to set the ground rules – think of it as a policy pre-nup. Key dimensions of effective policy pre-nups include:

- an agreed policy programme
- ground rules for commissioning advice
- an operating model for engaging with policy advisors
- processes to ensure advice is high-quality.

The first dance – it takes two to tango

Like any new relationship, you need to establish trust. The first opportunity to do this is through early discussion with new ministers. Chief of staff to John Key, Wayne Eagleson, put it this way: “Put yourself

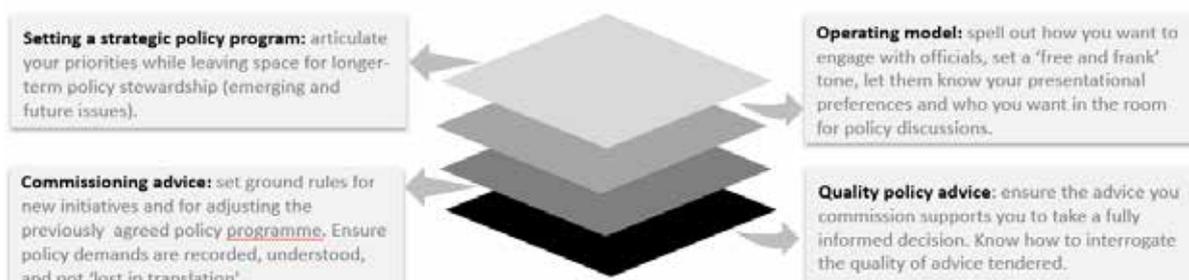
in their shoes – understand the politics, even though it is their job to manage the politics.”

There are conventions around the first dance. A Brief to the Incoming Minister (BIM) is an opportunity for the department to show that it understands what the new government wants to achieve.

GOOD GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING DEPENDS ON GREAT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MINISTERS AND THEIR DEPARTMENTS.

What about the other dance partner? What can ministers do to establish good relationships with their departments? Former Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison saw it this way: “It is ministers who provide policy leadership and direction [while the public service should] get on and deliver the government’s agenda.” New Zealand ministers are traditionally more open to ideas from the public service. Agendas defined by manifestos are not always clear or detailed. Ministers would be doing themselves a disservice to ignore advice from policy experts, especially their own officials. Officials also hold institutional knowledge on previous decisions and their success (or failure). If done well, the long-term insights

Minister-departmental relationships – key components



briefings might create additional space for fresh ideas.

Define the programme – get with the programme

No government starts with a clean slate. There will be legacy items and ongoing business in an incoming government's workload. The role of officials is to help ministers develop and implement their agenda. But that doesn't mean they can't have influence over that agenda.

Tools exist to help ministers articulate their strategic priorities to departments, like letters of strategic intent. Some ministers are especially open to debate on policy direction. Bill English, as Minister of Finance, held regular "chew" sessions with officials – they were opportunities to discuss broad policy challenges before formally commissioning advice on how to deal with them. Back in the 1990s, Premier House sessions involved discussions between ministers and senior officials. This seemed to catalyse a shared understanding of priorities.

Adjusting the programme – good commissioning is key

Defining a policy programme is not a set-and-forget task. Things change, as COVID-19 has taught us. Even in less fraught times, problems arise that require adjustments to the policy programme. Ministers and officials need to agree on priorities. Acting on opportunities for innovation requires less impactful programmes to be dropped. Ministers and officials need to agree processes for re-prioritisation and de-prioritisation.

That means setting ground rules for new initiatives and for dumping old ones. Good commissioning is crucial, with clarity on what is being asked for and who should be involved. Messages can get muddled in translation from ministers to people developing advice. To help with commissioning, conversation prompts were developed as part of a Policy Project management tool called Start Right. Something similar could be developed to guide upstream conversations between ministers and officials. Alarming, but

understandably, ministers sometimes come into the role not knowing how to commission advice from officials. And that's not the only area where they might be flying blind.

CONFIDENT MINISTERS GENERALLY HAVE AN APPETITE FOR FREE AND FRANK ADVICE.

Do ministers need training?

In the UK, the Institute for Government (IFG) provides training for ministers and shadow ministers. In Australia, the McKinnon Institute's Advanced Political Leadership course prepares members of parliament for future ministerial roles. In Aotearoa, there is less support. The Cabinet Office provides a basic handbook for new ministers, and central agencies provide briefings. Seasoned ministers sometimes act as mentors to junior colleagues. Anecdotally, formal training is often shunned by politicians, who don't want to admit they need help (especially

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in front of their colleagues). The IFG’s Ministers Reflect series includes interviews of ex-ministers on what they wished they’d known before taking office. The IFG concludes: “Given they are responsible for serious matters which affect everyday life, helping ministers properly prepare for their jobs would clearly be to the benefit of us all.” The same could be said in Aotearoa.

Bridges or barriers – ministerial offices and advisors

Ministers get bespoke support through their private office. The choice of who is in the minister’s office, how they relate to departmental officials, and how they articulate an “operating model” is crucial. The public services commissioner issued a code of conduct specifically for ministerial office staff.

Whoever is in the minister’s office, whether in political or policy roles, they need to work together to support the minister to maintain good relationships with departments. As the “eyes and ears of the minister”, ministerial office staff need to ensure the minister knows what’s going on in their departments and that departments have early warning about the minister’s thinking or future demands for advice. This includes substantive insights from meetings with stakeholders and other ministers to more administrative issues like the minister’s preferences about how advice is presented and who’s in the room for discussions.

Rules of engagement – agree on an operating model

It is important to get the operating model right – setting ground rules up-front helps. For example, some ministers are readers, others prefer oral briefings, and some love visual aids.

Similarly, some ministers prefer to only have senior officials in the discussion; others want to hear from the person who prepared the advice. A former colleague of the UK Cabinet Secretary the late Sir Jeremy Heywood noted: “Heywood would always involve the person actually doing the work. Generous, yes, but also more effective.” When people further down the food chain are involved in discussions with the minister, the minister gets the real oil and officials may get a great development experience.

It’s all about trust

Confident ministers generally have an appetite for free and frank advice. Chris Hipkins set that tone when he called for more “hard-hitting advice”, saying “Ministers aren’t mushrooms, they shouldn’t be kept in the dark ... Even if I reject the advice I’m given, I think I’d make a better decision for being properly informed.” Senior officials and ministerial office staff can help create a safe place for this to occur. As the inaugural Head of the Policy Profession said at an IPANZ event: “Trust creates the space for free and frank advice. Where the relationship between

ministers and advisors is high trust and respectful, there is and always has been room for candid and challenging views to be aired.”

Be an intelligent customer of advice – learn to recognise quality

As the customer of policy advice, ministers should be able to question that advice. Policy decisions are rightly the domain of politicians, but they can help improve the quality of those decisions by:

- encouraging free and frank advice (“tell me what I need to hear, not what you think I want to hear”)
- allowing space in budgets for policy stewardship – to build future considerations into current advice and to invest in future capability
- being skilled at interrogating advice.

Providing ministers with a simple policy test or a detailed checklist (see box below) might help. Questions from the “demand side” (ministers) should mirror agreed “supply side” standards that departments have set themselves.

Conclusion

Like any relationship, if both sides have a common understanding about overall priorities, and some ground rules about how they interact, then it is easier to have “courageous conversations”. In the case of ministers and their officials, that means better decisions for the public they serve.

Questions for testing the quality of policy advice...

Is the real problem or opportunity exposed?

- What is the underlying problem or opportunity? How soon does it need to be acted on? Are we treating the real problem and not a symptom?
- Who is being affected, how, and by how much?
- Why should government intervene?
- What if we did nothing?

Has the broader context been taken into account?

- Why is this being considered now; what is the trigger?
- What prior or related advice and decisions should I know about?
- Are other ministerial portfolios affected? How? What is their perspective on the problem and solutions? Is it a priority for them?
- What opportunities are there to work together on a solution? What are the points of leverage?
- Is there other work that this links to or is dependent on?

Is advice informed by the best evidence, insights and analysis?

- What informed the advice – what evidence, data, research, and/or relevant experts were involved?
- What insights have been drawn from along the value chain (e.g. Maori, citizens and end users, frontline staff, regulators, investors, service providers)?
- What types of analysis has been applied (Treaty, economic, social impact, environmental, cost-benefit, wellbeing, gender, race/ethnic)?

Will it work? Can the recommended options really be delivered and will they deliver results?

- What criteria were used to choose between policy options? (Treaty obligations, impact on outcomes, ease of implementation, costs & benefits, return on investment).
- What is required for successful implementation? Have internal and external parties who might be crucial for successful implementation been involved or consulted?
- What are the risks? How will significant risks be managed, mitigated, or accepted?

Does it tell the full story? Enough to make a fully informed decision?

What’s the condensed story?

- What are you aiming to achieve and what will success look like?
- How will your recommended actions lead to successful outcomes? What immediate or intermediate benefits can I expect? When?
- How does this action align with current Government priorities and Treaty obligations?

Who benefits and how will we know?

- What are the key benefits, for who? (winners and losers)
- How much will they be impacted (positive and negative)?
- What indicators would show “this is working”? What early signals would show things aren’t going as planned?

How confident are you in your evidence and analysis?

- Is this advice based on high level assumptions or detailed analysis?
- What areas of uncertainty remain?
- Do we need to make an interim decision now and have another discussion when you have more detailed evidence and more robust advice?

Tell me what I need to know, not what you think I want to hear...

- Are you being free and frank with me?

MĀORI CROWN RELATIONSHIPS WORKING WITH IWI IN WAYS THAT ENHANCE CAPABILITY



Dr Maria Bargh



Nicky Birch

The emphasis on strengthening Māori Crown relationships in the Public Service Act 2020 and the establishment of Te Arawhiti signalled a new era in the public service's interactions with tangata whenua. Carl Billington investigates whether this is changing the way public sector agencies approach their interactions with Māori.

A growing willingness to engage

"There has been a bit of a change in the last ten years, and it's encouraging to see the good intentions on the side of the Crown," reflects Dr Maria Bargh, Associate Professor at Te Kawa a Māui – School of Māori Studies, Victoria University.

"We seem to have finally moved beyond a view of 'closing off' historical settlements, and instead there are clear signals this is about ongoing relationships as we move forward together. However, there's still a lot of work to be done on how agencies interact with Māori."

Nicky Birch, Tumu Kōrero (Communications Lead), previous Co-Chair of the Iwi Communications Collective and member of Māori Communications Collective, offers similar reflections: "We've seen job titles shift from transactional labels to more relationship-based roles, with explicit commitments to te reo and tikanga and more Māori being recruited into communications roles.

"Today we have a dedicated Māori Crown relationships agency and a Māori Health Authority. We're also seeing an increasing focus at an all-of-government level on increasing Māori capability and competency of each agency so they are better equipped and experienced to work with Māori communities."

Partners, not stakeholders

While the increased commitment to engage more closely with Māori over the last decade is rightly celebrated, it needs to move beyond simply treating Māori as stakeholders. Under Te Tiriti, Māori are partners to the Crown, not stakeholders. Embedding this is the next step we must take, and it can't be another decade.

"Policy is being shaped and written on significant issues by full-time, fully resourced staff working to government timeframes. Those teams then want to talk to iwi within government timeframes, as though iwi are equally resourced to engage.

"It leaves iwi having to prioritise which issues they'll respond to – not because they're not interested but because they aren't resourced to the same capacity. It's great that the Crown is looking to involve them, but it's often without any consideration of iwi resourcing," Bargh explains.

"It also shows up in the language used and the way public servants talk about their engagement with Māori," Birch adds.

"In programme structures, relationships with Māori are often assigned to stakeholder or diversity functions. But we're not diversity – in our worldview, you are the diversity.

"The common reference to 'mainstream' audiences in marketing and communications subtly and explicitly undermines Māori as partners. When people use the term mainstream, they're implying that this is something Māori are not. We're not a minority group, and we're not stakeholders to manage," Birch explains.

A fundamental change of context

What Bargh and Birch are describing points to something fundamental in the psychology of government agencies: an inevitable tendency to relate to all those they interact with, not just Māori, from within their own context.

Government agencies exist within a self-contained worldview that unconsciously requires all others to operate on its terms. This creates obvious challenges to partnering with any entity that operates within a different context.

"It comes back to the Crown accepting the uniqueness of Māori political entities in the same way that the government works with other state powers internationally," Bargh explains. "Prior to meeting international representatives, officials receive briefings on key issues of interest, cultural protocols, and the current social, economic, and political context those authorities operate within. A similar approach could be taken before meeting with iwi and hapū," Bargh suggests.

IN OUR WORLDVIEW, YOU ARE THE DIVERSITY.

"I think when public servants go out to iwi, they perhaps anticipate iwi will be grateful they've come to talk to them, when actually this is one of many meetings this week with government agencies and no one is really that grateful for being asked about the same topic all over again.

"Some of that could be resolved by briefings and intelligence before they go out. Is the meeting even necessary or have they already provided the information you need elsewhere?" adds Bargh.

Birch picks up the same line of thought: "When government officials come to our place to engage, their travel, their time, and their food



Marina Hetaraka with members of Ngāti Rehia at the kauri sanctuary

is paid for. Ours is not. So think about how you might contribute back – not just in terms of cost but for how you might take back the experience that’s given to you. Come to listen, not to take.

“My karani used to say to me, ‘E rua ōku karu, e rua ōku taringa, kōtahi tōku waha – you have two eyes, two ears, and one mouth.’ Watch, listen, feel. Come with humility. Come to learn.”

Steps in the right direction

Having acknowledged these challenges, Bargh and Birch both affirm some of the more positive approaches that are developing between Crown agencies and iwi.

Te Papa Ahurewa is one example. Te Papa Ahurewa is funded by Rotorua Lakes Council through the Te Arawa Lakes Trust and was established specifically to provide local whānau, hapū, and iwi with technical assistance on resource management processes.

“There’s no agenda for the council in this – it’s a truly independent entity that exists solely to help iwi,” Bargh explains.

Other examples include seeing more staff moving between roles in iwi and government agencies, with secondments and flexible employment opportunities, rather than simply recruiting the strongest talent away from iwi.

Birch sees some powerful, yet simple, ways these initiatives could be developed further: “If you recruit Māori, ensure their employment agreement includes the opportunity for them to work back with their hapū or iwi.

“If their iwi has a regional office in the region, include opportunities to contribute to projects there or create work exchange and mentoring opportunities – enabling government staff to build relationships and iwi staff to gain insights and input into government processes and so influence policy,” Birch adds.

Marina Hetaraka, Senior Analyst at the Ministry for the Environment, has experienced these opportunities first-hand. “I was working as a senior advisor on the Kauri Sanctuary project at Takou Bay that Northland hapū, Ngāti Rehia, are leading with support from the Crown and the One Billion Trees project.

“It’s an amazing initiative that embeds te ao Māori approaches beautifully. I felt like I didn’t have enough time to learn from them, so I asked if they’d be happy for me to come back to learn more and see where I might contribute through my role with Ministry for the Environment’s Freshwater Investments team,” Hetaraka explains.

The ministry has a dedicated development fund, established by the chief executive, with a specific category for opportunities that help bring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori into the Ministry’s everyday work.

“I applied to go back and work part-time for Ngāti Rehia. It was confirmed in December, and I started in January,” Hetaraka explains.

Whaea Nora Rameka, Ngāti Rehia’s Business and Innovation Manager welcomed the arrangement: “For Ngāti Rehia, it’s about achieving a direct line to the Ministry for the Environment. We’re coastal people with rivers and awa that run all through our whenua – we’re directly affected by the policies they create.

“Having a senior advisor like Marina be a part of our organisation has meant she’s part of our world and sees the passion for what we do. Marina understands how we’re using mātauranga Māori in all that we do, and she can take that understanding back with her into the ministry.”

“It’s so good to see the genuine interest, drive, and resourcing from the Crown. How we integrate some of what we’re learning is the next challenge – it isn’t something you can just tack on out of context under the Crown’s existing worldview. I don’t think there’s been enough thinking yet about how to protect the integrity of the mātauranga that is being shared with us and ensure it isn’t just another resource we take from Māori,” Hetaraka explains.

IT’S SO GOOD TO SEE THE GENUINE INTEREST, DRIVE, AND RESOURCING FROM THE CROWN.

“How well we do that will either create a positive way forward or just repeat the past.”

Towards a positive future

Hetaraka offers the following advice for others looking to partner with iwi and Māori entities:

“Go sit and listen. Hear their aspirations for the project, for their rohe. Go humbly. Show respect to the kaumātua and kuia who are acting as kaitiaki for their people and making their time available to you. Don’t go with all the answers or solutions – and be prepared to change your approach based on what you hear.

“I hope this opens up more doorways for us to learn and grow from Te Tai Tokerau Māori, and I hope it gives Ngāti Rehia more direct links to the Ministry and its mahi for the future too.”

Looking ahead, Whaea Rameka is equally hopeful: “This can increase understanding of what their policies mean for our people. Hopefully they can even incorporate some of the policies and practices we put in place, some of the things they’ve learnt from us.

“Too often agencies want to come and tell us what is good for us. We know what is good for us; we just need them to listen. We’d love to see more secondments like this.”

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DURING THE PANDEMIC

CRISIS VS CODE



James Gluck

When COVID-19 hit, things had to be done differently, but this brought a danger. James Gluck asks whether ethical considerations were too easily sidelined during the pandemic.

Crisis situations often require speedy decisions, and the COVID-19 pandemic has

been no exception, forcing governments across the world to formulate policy quickly and with little broader experience to draw from, while knowing that decisions will have far-reaching implications for all citizens. The lessons learned from the pandemic on how policy is made and executed during a crisis will be debated for a long time. This is true both internationally and in New Zealand. Readers of *Public Sector* will be familiar with this, with the impact of COVID-19 on governance being broadly and consistently covered.

Downplaying ethics in favour of haste

Ethical considerations, particularly in terms of conflicts of interest in procurement and policy making are vital, but they are often the first victims of crisis. The need to respond quickly and efficiently means that many parts of the policy-making process are shortened; public consultation, long procurement processes, collaborative design, and other processes designed to make decisions robust and transparent are either foregone entirely or done perfunctorily.

The danger is that this can lead to both perceived and real conflicts of interest continuing unmanaged and unmonitored, and while foregoing consultation and

collaboration may be accepted by citizens, the perception of unethical behaviour during a crisis may have repercussions for public trust. A perception of opportunism during a crisis is a real danger when transparency and accountability are ignored in favour of haste.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARE OFTEN THE FIRST VICTIMS OF CRISIS.

International experience

As early as April 2020, alarms were being raised in the United Kingdom about the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). Its members were secret, and its discussions were kept confidential, even as officials and politicians made continual reference to the group as justification and support for their policies. Preventing conflicts of interest was used as a justification for this – the Chief Science Advisor said that secrecy was required to prevent the SAGE members from being targets of lobbying, only to reverse that position once public pressure had mounted for transparency. Even then, groups such as the publishers of the *British Medical Journal*

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found themselves unable to get information on the financial interests of SAGE members.

Where information was available, a disquieting picture was drawn of the government's COVID-19 response. The chair of the Vaccine Taskforce was both a managing partner at a life sciences venture firm as well as the partner of a Conservative minister. The Chief Science Advisor was found to have a large number of shares in GlaxoSmithKline, a company that had sold 60 million doses of an in-development treatment to the government. The Oxford University representative placed on both the vaccine taskforce and the COVID testing advisory panel had large investments in the pharmaceutical company that sold antibody tests to the government.

In almost all of these cases, the individuals involved and the government insisted that they were not making decisions that involved the companies they had a financial interest in – they were simply giving scientific advice or co-ordinating processes, and so they stated that any conflicts of interest were managed properly.

In the United States, under the Trump presidency, the Operation Warp Speed vaccine development project was overseen by a former pharmaceutical executive, who, due to being appointed as an unpaid special advisor, was exempt from having to disclose his financial interests, although media investigation discovered substantial holdings in pharmaceutical company stock. This wasn't as robustly defended as the cases in the United Kingdom, perhaps because Trump's administration had made a habit of placing industry insiders in powerful government positions.

In Canada, their vaccine taskforce explicitly and intentionally included industry insiders, and while their specific financial interests were originally kept secret, as they were in the United Kingdom, they were eventually released. There were a few factors taken into account for management of conflicts in the Canadian case. The positions were filled on a voluntary basis, and therefore, the Canadian ethics commissioner was unable to have oversight of the committee members, in a similar fashion to the appointment mentioned above in the United States. Where conflicts were declared by members, they were often not seen as grounds for refusal. There was also an appeal to authority – since the committee was only giving advice to ministers and not making decisions, then as long as the conflicts were declared there was no issue, as supposedly ministers could take those conflicts into account.

New Zealand experience

There can be a temptation to believe that Aotearoa New Zealand is immune to the same kinds of scandals and unethical behaviour that was prominent in other countries. The COVID-19 response has, generally speaking, been seen as far better than the experience overseas, although recent challenges to the details of policy both in court and the arena of public opinion have been numerous. However, concerns have been raised regarding the transparency and management of COVID-19 related funding. The Auditor-General has penned a letter to the Treasury regarding public reporting on COVID-19 finances, explicitly stating that while legislative requirements have been met, transparency has not been sufficient to inform parliament and the public of how money has been spent.

A DISQUIETING PICTURE WAS DRAWN OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 RESPONSE.

It is worthwhile then to consider what best practice looks like in New Zealand, and the Office of the Auditor-General provides several useful tools including Integrity Town, an interactive quiz that covers a range of conflict-raising scenarios. The advice is reasonably clear that both disclosure and management are key components of ethical behaviour. Simply stating that one has a conflict is only a first step. In addition, it is not only the ability to make decisions that has to be considered – proper management includes preventing conflicted individuals from influencing decisions as well.

Given this advice, it was unsurprising that the Auditor-General would have critiques of the way that the Ministry of Health managed the procurement of saliva testing for COVID-19. Notably, the period for the Ministry's Request for Proposal (RFP) process was shortened from twenty-five to ten days due to the need for expediency, and the final testing solution was expected only about a month later.

Some formal aspects of procurement procedure were followed, such as proposals being clearly assessed against listed criteria. There was also a subsequent internal assurance review, which picked up on some of the issues the Auditor-General would later critique.

The Auditor-General noted worrying deficiencies in the process. These included the lack of a procurement plan and the lack of independent auditing or probity

advice from external sources. A good deal of attention was paid, however, to the management of conflicts of interest. Four out of the five members of the panel giving advice on the preferred supplier had conflicts, including through previous employment and through professional and personal relationships. One had stated previous opinions on saliva testing methods and had experience as an assessor, auditing organisations involved in the proposals. While these conflicts were appropriately identified, the Auditor-General did not believe that the management plans were specific enough to mitigate the perception or actual risk of decisions being influenced by these conflicts. The standard policies the Ministry of Health used were critiqued as vague and brief.

Perception and trust

Ultimately, this example is not a smoking gun of unethical behaviour. But as the Auditor-General points out, the risk of conflicts of interest are not just about actual decisions or "good policy" – they are about perception and trust.

During crises, public servants are asked to make difficult and complex decisions at pace. In the Ministry of Health, the turn around time from proposals to delivery was intended to be just over a month, and although delays did mean it took a few months, it was still a drastically short period. This is unavoidable if we want government to be able to act swiftly and decisively when it is needed. Some aspects of decision making do need to be shortened or even skipped if this is to happen, but allowing that to impact on integrity processes and especially management of conflicts of interest runs a significant risk.

Internationally and domestically, we have seen a difference between engagement with an integrity process and engagement with best practice. Sometimes it is by declaring conflicts but not managing them and so allowing the declaration to be the only concession to the process. Other times, it is by designing the roles to escape the usual jurisdiction of ethical oversight, like volunteers. Even when a more robust procedure is followed, if conflict management plans are brief and perfunctory, the perception of bias can still be a risk. Integrity isn't just a matter of following the rules that are in place – it requires active engagement.

James Gluck has recently finished his PhD with the School of Government at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, specialising in integrity in public policy. He is currently employed at the Ministry of Social Development in a non-related role.



Leilani Tamu

MBIE'S LEILANI TAMU WANTS TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM

Leilani Tamu began her career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) straight from Auckland University with a first-class master's degree in Pacific history. She's worn many hats since: poet, writer, Fulbright scholar, and former political candidate. Right now, it's her leadership role within New Zealand's public service that's fulfilling her need for "a career with purpose" – but only if the system is open to change. Jacqui Gibson caught up with her.

Leilani Tamu just might be the "system circuit breaker" the New Zealand public service needs right now.

As manager of MBIE's Langa Le Vā Pacific Policy team, Leilani has helped design a few so-called circuit breakers in the three-and-a-half years she's been in the role. From tripling the size of her team to commissioning new research on the workforce challenges facing Pacific communities to putting the Ministry's might behind initiatives and partnerships to improve the intergenerational wealth and social mobility of Pacific people.

In 2020, the Tupu Tai internship programme won MBIE the Supreme Diversity Works Award, following a major programme expansion led by Leilani. More recently, Leilani helped set up Tū Mau Mana Moana, a new scholarship programme for mid-career Pacific leaders not getting a fair crack at promotion through the Public Service Commission's Career Board process.

But what exactly are circuit breakers?

Circuit breaking a biased system

"They're examples of initiatives needed to change the system – a system that's imbued with a bias that tends to favour those who designed the system in the first place. Predominantly, that's well-heeled Pākehā men," explains Leilani on a video call from Auckland.

"The idea behind a circuit breaker is that it's a temporary but much-needed correction to the system. In theory, once the system has changed, you can take it away because it's done the job and you don't need it anymore."

But you only need to look at a 2018 report commissioned by MBIE, The Southern Initiative, and Auckland Co-Design Lab – the *Pacific People's Workforce Challenge* report – to see that the Pacific community needs plenty more circuit breakers from government agencies, says Leilani.

The report found that Pacific people have the lowest median income levels across all ethnic groups in New Zealand (\$19,700 compared with \$28,500 for the total population) and are over-

represented in low-skilled, low-paid roles in sectors that are most at risk of automation over the next thirty years.

It found they have significantly lower net worth than the average New Zealander (the average net worth for a person from Auckland's Pacific population is \$12,000 compared with \$87,000 for the non-Pacific population) and a home-ownership rate that is one-third that of the non-Pacific population.

Alo Vaka is pushing boundaries

Enter Alo Vaka, the Auckland Pacific Skills Shift Initiative, an MBIE-led collaboration between Auckland Unlimited, The Southern Initiative, and The Cause Collective – and one of Leilani's team's most recent initiatives.

"Ultimately, Alo Vaka is about identifying pathways into higher-quality, better-paid employment," says Leilani. "But we're pushing the boundaries by directly involving Pacific aiga [families] to determine the best, most effective ways to achieve that goal.

"We're interrupting our own status quo thinking where we, as government officials, typically go to the same source of evidence, make the same set of assumptions about what data should be collected and analysed, and talk to the same people as we go about our work. What's exciting about Alo Vaka is that we're doing things differently. To me, creating and supporting bold programmes like this is circuit breaking in action."

Changing the system

In a way, Leilani is a kind of circuit breaker herself. Leilani grew up in Auckland to a Samoan mum – with ancestral connections to Tonga, Germany, and Scotland – and a Pākehā dad.

Today, she's a senior public servant on a mission to change the system, but only as long as system change is required.

"At forty, I've had several careers. Not all have been in government. I don't see myself as having to stay on the same track. In fact, I think it's good to keep reflecting on where I've come from and where I'm headed. I feel it's good to ask the questions: Does what I'm doing excite me? Am I making a meaningful difference? Will New Zealand become a better place with my contribution?"

She's also the kind of leader who is prepared to call out those things that need calling out in the hope the public service might become more aware of its biases and the interests it serves – and evolve more quickly as a result.

"I have a real sense of fairness and integrity, and I really do care about process and arriving at solutions in good faith. To achieve that, though, I believe sometimes we have to put our necks on

the line when something needs to be said. Sometimes we have to confront prejudice even if it makes us and others in powerful positions uncomfortable.”

Battling bias at work

In truth, workplace bias is something Leilani has been tackling all her working life.

There was a time, early in her MFAT role, when her manager’s boss disagreed with an outstanding performance rating Leilani had received on the principle it wasn’t the norm for someone just eight months in the job.

Eventually, after Leilani requested a review of the process, the outstanding performance rating was approved. But it took a particularly difficult conversation to get to that point, Leilani recalls.

“I remember he [my manager’s boss] turning beetroot red as I said I wasn’t prepared to back down and that I’d like a formal review of his decision to overturn my manager’s recommendation. I think he just wasn’t used to a young person – a Pacific woman at that – standing up for herself and questioning his authority.”

Recently, Leilani reluctantly called out “a manager of significant influence” for an email that included deficit framing of Māori and Pacific people.

“I waited before I pushed back. Honestly, I was hoping others in the email distribution list – all of whom were Pākehā – might say

something, but no. Look, I know it’s really hard being that person. It singles you out and can take a high emotional toll on you as a result. But I also knew saying nothing wasn’t right.

SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO CONFRONT PREJUDICE EVEN IF IT MAKES US AND OTHERS IN POWERFUL POSITIONS UNCOMFORTABLE.

“In the end, I politely replied-all, asking the manager to provide her rationale. Maybe she could point to evidence I was unaware of? In the end, she didn’t, instead referring to her belief system, which, in essence, was unchecked bias playing out. Later, several people on the distribution list contacted me privately to express their support for what I’d said, how I’d gone about it, and the grounds on which I spoke out.”

Leilani says it’s important to her to uphold people’s mana in such situations and take a values-based approach. She believes doing so is respectful and more likely to result in positive change.

“I never want to put someone down or trample on their mana in these situations. I’d hate for someone to do that to me, and I won’t do it to others. Instead, I think it’s important to focus on the issues and ask questions that enable us all to take a minute and reflect – and ultimately arrive at a different outcome.”

Talented, inclusive leaders who inspire

Leilani says MBIE has been an excellent environment to hone her hands-on management and strategic leadership skills, as well as learn from others.

“I’ve really enjoyed working under MBIE Chief Executive Carolyn Tremain. She’s determined, savvy, and committed to the values of our organisation. Equally, she’s appointed some amazing leaders who’ve supported and inspired me on my leadership journey.”

Leilani lists MBIE’s General Manager for Economic Strategy, Kirsty Flannagan; Mel Porter, MBIE’s first Samoan Deputy Chief Executive (DCE); and former MBIE DCE, Jo Hughes, as three stand-out leaders.

“Jo is someone who asks thought-provoking questions. I was really taken with her decision to stand down from her huge MBIE role to take up a smaller, yet still impactful, role with the Privacy Commission in 2020. At the time, she was really open about wanting to spend more time with her family. I loved that. It helps create a culture of inclusiveness. Of course, building an inclusive culture takes a lot more. But it starts at the top with that kind of openness and honesty.”

Next steps for Leilani

As for what lies ahead, Leilani admits she’s probably ready for the next step in her career though she’s unsure of exactly what it might be. That said, her sights are set on the role of Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Commissioner or Commissioner for Race Relations at some point.

“I love that they’re both public facing roles, but still part of government. You’re independent, yet still speak into the system and call it to account. I’d love that opportunity to influence hearts and minds, while continuing my journey to change the system.”

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THE RISE – AND RISE – OF EXTREMISM IN A DIGITAL WORLD



Paul Spoonley

In just the last few years, we have seen something change in public debate. Distinguished Professor Emeritus Paul Spoonley explores a disturbing trend and what lies behind it.

Events since 2019 have highlighted the growing presence of politically extreme activists and organisations, from the Christchurch massacres through to the arrival of QAnon-inspired attacks and vitriol and to pandemic-related activism, both online and at parliament.

There is now considerable evidence to show that there has been significant growth in the presence and activities of the radical right in New Zealand, along with those who share these views.

The low trust of these activists in both the values and processes that underpin a liberal democracy, combined with a willingness to directly and often violently challenge those who are charged with leading and managing core government agencies, is a major concern. They also undermine the safety and wellbeing of those communities that are seen as a “threat” by these activists.

When and why?

International agencies such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center noticed a significant shift in the tone and extent of extremism in the 2015–16 period. It had been growing for some time, especially as identitarian and ultra-nationalist politics re-emerged. White supremacy gained new adherents and a new set of arguments, beginning with publications such as the Renaud Camus book on the “grand replacement” in 2011, the appearance of Bloc Identitaire in France in 2002, and the use of the term “alt-right” by Richard Spencer in 2009.

But it all ramped up as the mistrust of politicians and the media began to get oxygen with populist and nationalist politicians, notably Trump. Then, in 2017, the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville (“You/Jews will not replace us” was the chant) and the appearance of QAnon signalled key elements in this new phase.

Since then, the growth of an online extremist ecosystem using messaging formats and a range of social media platforms has seen the spread of extremist and white supremacist ideologies and a major increase in the quantum of this online material. It is estimated that there are about 5 million politicised anti-Semitic tweets per day. In 2019, the FBI ruled that QAnon was a domestic terrorist threat.

What about Aotearoa?

New Zealand joined these developments in the worst way possible – the massacres at Christchurch mosques in 2019. In fact, the Muslim community warned a number of government agencies about the growing level of Islamophobia prior to 2019. The subsequent Royal Commission of Inquiry noted that there had been insufficient attention and resource paid to the presence of white supremacists and violent extremists. We were unprepared.

Since then, the volume and the threat to communities and individuals from these activists has increased locally, driven by the anti-government politics surrounding the COVID pandemic and building on a range of pre-existing political concerns and activism – ranging from being anti-5G or 1080 through to concerns about what are seen as conspiratorial plans by the UN – or Jews – to “take over”.

Evidence of these activities and groups is now readily available, although – I would argue – incomplete. Researchers such as those



who are part of the Disinformation Project at Te Pūnaha Matatini through to a group such as Paparōa provide updates (see Paparōa's profiles of the extremists involved in the parliament occupation).

I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A LEVEL OF CONSENSUS AMONG WHITE SUPREMACIST AND OTHER EXTREMISTS.

In 2021, the Department of Internal Affairs contracted the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) to provide an overview of online extremism. In any given week, the ISD encountered 192 extremist accounts, 20,000 posts, 200,000 likes, and 38,000 re-posts or re-tweets in New Zealand. On far-right Facebook pages, New Zealand had 750 active users for every 100,000 general Facebook users; the similar figure for Australia was 399, and for Canada it was 252. We have a problem!

The Digital Safety Unit at the Department of Internal Affairs recently provided material on 2021 activity. Identity motivated extremism, essentially white supremacists, dominated the material with 80 percent of the material found to be objectionable. It was interesting to see that Twitter was responsive when they were informed that they were hosting objectionable material. BitChute not so much. BitChute was established in the UK in 2017 as a "free speech" platform, but many of those who have been banned from other platforms can be found here.

The threat to democracy

There are some puzzling, as well as deeply troubling, aspects to these new radical right politics. One is the way they have been able to expand their audience and their membership. In terms of my own research over the last four decades, I have never seen such a level of consensus among white supremacist and other extremists about our social and political world. As evidence from a variety of sources demonstrates, the constituency for these radical views is now significantly larger than it has been before, largely due to the possibilities provided by a digital world combined with the anxieties generated by a pandemic.

The puzzling aspect (at least to me) in New Zealand is the adoption of international and especially American arguments and images. The QAnon beliefs about a paedophile cabal running the United States, the notion of a "great awakening" (possibly led by Trump), or the vitriol directed at the "deep state" have all found willing believers in New Zealand.

What is challenging is that there are a number of Māori adherents to these beliefs – when Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori in general are major targets of attack. The Muslim and Jewish communities are long-standing targets, but what is noticeable about the current wave is the misogyny, especially directed at women politicians and particularly directed at the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern.

It is understandable that those already committed to radical right beliefs would be willing to adopt these arguments. But it also appears that those who were involved in single issue politics (anti-1080 protestors, for example) or those who appear to have had no previous exposure have also been recruited.

We are now very much part of a global extremist ecosystem.

Concerns for the public sector

In terms of the public sector, and the robustness of our democratic system, I think there are a number of concerns.

Firstly, those communities targeted by the radical right have known about the violence and hate involved for a long time. These communities, as clients and partners of the state, need to be listened to and to be resourced to play a role in countering violent extremism.

Secondly, there has been a targeting of public servants. There are several New Zealand sites that have named public sector individuals who have played a role in the government's response to the pandemic, along with a plan to "charge" these individuals with various "crimes" and for them to be punished. Hanging seems the preferred option.

No public servant should be the subject of doxing (providing private details online) or to vitriol and threats because they work as part of the government.

Thirdly, we need to consider how we can identify and mitigate any attempts to undermine public safety, social cohesion, and democratic systems. The outgoing Chief Censor, David Shanks, has noted that the regulatory environment is "not fit for purpose" when it comes to managing digital behaviour and safety.

WE ARE NOW VERY MUCH PART OF A GLOBAL EXTREMIST ECOSYSTEM.

There are various initiatives that are in process, including legislation before parliament. But we need clear guidelines, for example, on hate speech. We need to know what prompts people to be recruited or radicalised. He Whenua Taurikura: National Centre of Research Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, which is to be established soon, will help provide evidence.

Countering these forces is not easy. The volume of material, and the ability to avoid being identified as the source of that material, make monitoring and then reacting difficult. The dark web or the alt-tech world proliferates and provides platforms that are not easy to either monitor or to regulate. The Christchurch shooter used 8chan, which then re-appeared as 8kun. And remember that while 1.5 million posts of the shooter's video were blocked or removed following the massacre, the video is still circulating. And there were 12 million tweets in relation to the shootings in a very short period.

De-platforming is not easy.

How serious is all of this?

Very. Fifty-one people died in Christchurch. Others, both in those communities targeted but also in positions of leadership, have experienced hateful and hurtful attacks, both online and in person. By definition, an extremist is someone who does not conform to the norms or protocols of public engagement. When there are not shared rules of engagement, the options for dialogue or evidence-based discussion are limited.

Moreover, as we saw at parliament, the very nature of political disagreement and debate, much less the authority of the system of electing representatives, was challenged. As Jonathan Haidt commented recently in *The Atlantic*, we should assume that political polarisation will increase and that as "people lose trust in institutions, they lose trust in the stories told by those institutions".

WHEN THERE ARE NOT SHARED RULES OF ENGAGEMENT, THE OPTIONS FOR DIALOGUE OR EVIDENCE-BASED DISCUSSION ARE LIMITED.

This seems a critical point in our political history, with the expanded presence of extremist arguments and activists. The next General Election will provide one test of the influence and ongoing activism of these no-trust, anti-government extreme politics.

Paul Spoonley is one of the editors of the forthcoming book *Histories of Hate: The Radical Right in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Otago University Press).



Andrew Coster

POLICING IN CHALLENGING TIMES

COVID-19 has shown us a stark picture of what can happen to social cohesion when times are tough. Police Commissioner Andrew Coster explores recent challenges that affect all public institutions as the future becomes less clear.

In April 2020, retired US four-star general Stanley McChrystal was asked about the importance of social cohesion in getting through the emerging pandemic. He answered: “To win a war, you break your enemy into pieces, and then defeat them in detail. If you want to lose a war, you do the opposite: you get divided, and then each tries to defend themselves and their interests – and they can’t.”

The central importance of cohesion

New Zealand has experienced significant natural disasters, terror attacks, and a pandemic in recent years. And we face known and unknown challenges ahead.

Social cohesion is critical – it will ensure New Zealand can come together to successfully respond to these challenges. It is a concept based on trust. Trust in our institutions and trust in each other.

Police services have always had a keen awareness of the importance of institutional legitimacy. It was the central idea of the Peelian Principles when the first modern police service was established in the early 1800s in Britain. Sir Robert Peel referred to “policing by consent” – the idea that police were “citizens in uniform” who exercise their powers on behalf of the community, with its implicit consent and support.

While the terminology is foreign to most, the underlying idea is intuitive to New Zealanders. A recent survey showed that while only 10 percent of the public understood the term “policing by consent”, around 90 percent agreed that it is “important for Police to have the broad support of the public in order to deliver effective policing services”.

Earning trust

Effective and efficient policing relies on high levels of trust in the police. It is necessary so that officers can knock on a door and expect residents to co-operate or to report suspicious behaviour so we can respond and prevent crime. It is also critical to the safety of our staff, who go into unknown situations thousands of times a day.

Public trust is hard-earned. People expect a lot from their police – and rightly so. While being wary of over-surveillance, they also expect police to identify potential bad actors before harm occurs. Likewise, many want tough enforcement on gangs, while ensuring minority populations aren’t targeted in an unfair way. A significant portion of the population would like police to be armed, while there is also concern at the number of police shootings.

I make this point simply to note the inherent tensions in everything we do. The public are right to expect a lot from police. We have a highly capable workforce of 14,000 staff and make the fine judgments necessary to keep the public safe, while retaining the broad support of our communities. It is not always easy. We need to continue to talk and listen to a wide range of community views. We need to be accountable when we get things wrong. We also need to continue working with other agencies, iwi, and communities to get the best results for New Zealand.

Two very different challenges

Following the tragic events of 15 March 2019, we saw society coming together in a unified outpouring of support and determination, together with very high levels of trust and confidence in police. We worked alongside communities, and the public alerted us to suspicious activities – enabling officers to identify offenders and intervene to avert more violence in the days that followed.

COVID-19 proved a very different challenge for maintaining social cohesion and police legitimacy – we were effectively policing the whole community to support critical health outcomes. This required balance and careful judgments using a graduated response model – recognising that the health measures relied on social licence and only worked while they held the broad support of the whole population.

With so much information and misinformation flowing through the internet, the pandemic also highlighted the importance of trust in our wider institutions. In liberal democracies, institutions act as sense-making organs. At a time of extreme uncertainty, the public were asked to rely on our senior public servants, academic experts, and political leaders via the media (and directly at 1.00 pm) to provide accurate information and the best advice, amongst the noise.

From a police perspective, COVID-19 required hundreds of officers to be pulled from normal duties and re-deployed to MIQs. We managed alert-level boundaries. We worked with iwi leaders and others to mitigate concerns and avoid roadblocks at a time when our resources were stretched thin. And most recently, we had the anti-mandate protest outside parliament.

When functions come into conflict

Across all our work, our legislated functions often come into tension, and the protests brought these into clear view. The first function requires police to “keep the peace”. The second to “maintain public



safety". And the third to "enforce the law". These are sometimes in conflict, requiring discretion and judgment to ensure a proportionate response to any situation. People will not always agree with these judgments, but my hope is they generally trust that we make these decisions to the best of our ability, with the knowledge we have at hand and with the best interest of the community in mind.

POLICING RELIES ON HIGH LEVELS OF TRUST.

The protest headlined news bulletins for days on end, with hundreds of protesters camped under the Speaker's balcony and across from the press gallery. It was particularly difficult for those who lived, studied, or worked nearby.

Putting aside the merits of their case, most protesters had genuine and strongly held beliefs and had no intent to do harm. A small number were there to cause trouble. We monitored the risks closely, made some early arrests, and worked with leaders within the loose collection of protest groups to better understand what was happening and keep the peace.

Many called for tough action early on. But with the sheer numbers, which included children and the elderly, and their strong commitment, it meant there was a real chance of extreme violence had police escalated things. A repeat of the Springbok Tour riots was not something we wanted to see at the seat of our democracy, beamed across the world. Police explored options for a negotiated resolution, worked to reduce numbers over time, monitored reducing cohesion, and then we moved to a final resolution.

I am extremely proud of how our officers conducted themselves that day to bring the occupation to an end, and I believe New Zealanders should be proud of them too. It could have easily become something far uglier. The flow-on effects from that – from increased security concerns to stoking deep anger within a growing cohort on the edges of society – could have had serious long-term implications.

Public servants are often judged on how their actions play on the news that evening. It is much rarer for longer-term considerations to be acknowledged.

Policing in a divided world

As a country and a police service, we have fortunately avoided some of the more extreme fragmentation and associated challenges

experienced elsewhere. The Canadian trucker protests brought supply chains and roads to a standstill. Large scale protests and riots occurred in numerous other countries. And in the United States, we saw the convergence of growing tribalism, COVID-19, Black Lives Matter protests, and a loss of policing legitimacy.

It is difficult to navigate the role of policing in a society that is increasingly divided and without a shared sense of itself or its direction, and the impact can be significant. Following the killing of George Floyd in the United States in May 2020, there was a marked drop in 911 calls to police, despite shootings increasing. Reports also suggest officers pulled back from policing disadvantaged neighbourhoods. While the causes of crime are always complex, the United States experienced an unprecedented 30 percent increase in homicides that year, with a larger spike from June onwards, resulting in thousands of additional deaths.

Many democracies have seen an increase in societal tribalism. Shaped by the so-called culture wars and fuelled by social-media algorithms, tribalism is an indicator of both current and future social problems. It is often seen where institutions suffer a crisis of legitimacy and, once institutions lose legitimacy, the truth risks becoming the first casualty. Without agreement on what is true, societal debate on ways to solve our shared challenges becomes meaningless. Only the brute struggle for power remains.

New Zealand is not other countries. Our society and policing model has significant and important foundational differences from others. But we are an island in geographical terms only. It would be naive to think we are immune to the risks of declining social cohesion and increasing tribalism seen in other democracies. We have seen abroad the risks when parts of society cannot see their views or interests reflected in leading institutions.

Hopefully the most disruptive period of COVID-19 is behind us. With new challenges on the horizon, it is timely for us all to consider how we can ensure New Zealand retains high levels of trust in our public institutions. We know a central part in this is whether people can see themselves, their views, and their interests reflected in the conversations and policy discussions in Wellington. This is critical so that we can continue to help lead, make sense, and support a country that will continue to link arms in times of pressure – to win the battles and meet the challenges that lie ahead.

A Secure Future

We're well into 2022 and the market continues to be busy. Budget 2022 will help build a high wage, low emissions economy that provides greater economic security, while providing support to households affected by cost of living pressures.

Policy advice affects how public money is spent, how government operates and what future public services will look like. Great policy advice enables the government to make the best decisions, which ultimately leads to the improved wellbeing of New Zealanders. As part of the Government's response we are still seeing strong demand for the following professionals, both permanent and contract:

- Senior Policy Analysts
- Principal Advisors
- Programme Managers

To have a confidential chat about your options contact Kirsty Brown or Gemma Odams - 04 4999471
Email: kirsty.brown@h2r.co.nz or gemma.odams@h2r.co.nz



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BACKYARD NUCLEAR TESTING, POSSESSING BOOKS, AND SOME OTHER THINGS

We found out this year that being a mercenary is illegal. But what else is illegal? Simon Minto looks at a few examples of the more quirky bits of legislation here and overseas.

You may have heard that when Russia invaded Ukraine, some New Zealanders decided to travel there and take up arms to help defend Ukraine. But, in fact, it was illegal. Under the Mercenary Activities (Prohibition) Act 2004, being a mercenary in foreign conflict is not allowed. At the time the Act was passed, the minister Phil Goff said that mercenary activities are “effectively paid murder”.

To many people, this came as a surprise. But what other pieces of legislation might surprise you?

Noise control for whales

New Zealand has special protection for whales. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations, “no person shall make any loud or disturbing noises near whales”. Making such noises can get you a fine of \$10,000. Unfortunately, there’s no such fine for making loud or disturbing noises near people who are trying to sleep in your neighbourhood!

A few years ago, the Matariki fireworks display was postponed because of a visiting whale in Wellington harbour. The fireworks would have breached the regulations.

Being in possession of a book

In 2010, the *Everything Marijuana Book* was published. In 2013, it was banned in New Zealand because it encourages people to use marijuana – in other words, to commit a crime. Interestingly, being in possession of this book incurs a harsher penalty than actually growing or selling marijuana!

No rewards

If you lose something like your keys or wallet, don’t advertise that there’s a reward for its return. You risk a fine of \$200.

Check your wallet

The maximum fine for failing to file the annual accounts of an incorporated society is still one shilling a day.

Touching up banknotes

Putting glasses or a moustache on Ed Hillary or the Queen is still not on.

Trapping burglars

Don’t go setting traps for burglars or anyone else. In fact, a police officer was electrocuted and seriously injured in such a trap when he answered a fire alarm. The person was sick of being burgled so they electrified their front gate.

Testing

If you were thinking about it, you’re not allowed to carry out a nuclear weapon test in your backyard or anywhere else. If there’s anyone around to enforce the law afterwards, you could be looking at a fine of \$1 million or ten years’ jail.

Slimming down

In an effort to control New Zealand’s obesity problem, you can be refused a visa to enter New Zealand if your BMI is too high.

Guns and Buddhists

Self-defence is not a good-enough reason to get a firearms licence. Shooting things is OK though. Except this isn’t quite true. Under English laws that are still in force in New Zealand, “Protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions”. No such rights if you’re a Catholic or a Buddhist.

Compared with other countries, New Zealand is pretty good at updating its laws. When the Summary Offences Act replaced the Police Offences Act in 1981, the Act got rid of a lot of

offences around dodgy kite-flying, vindictive bell-ringing, and using dogs to drive farm vehicles. In 2017, New Zealand passed the Statutes Repeal Bill which removed 132 outdated or unused laws, although it still bans associating with convicted thieves.

And actually, the law about mercenaries wasn’t quite so prohibitive. Under the definition of a mercenary, the person must be motivated by private gain and be paid substantially more than local soldiers.

Other world regulations

This isn’t entirely the case in other countries. For example:

- It’s still illegal to break wind in a public place after 6.00 pm on Thursdays in Florida, USA.
- It’s a legal requirement to smile at all times in Milan, Italy – although there are exceptions, such as being at a funeral, visiting or working at a hospital, and being at the bedside of an ill family member. For everybody else, there’s no excuse. It came from when Milan was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and it has never been repealed.
- It’s illegal not to walk your dog at least three times a day in Turin, Italy. Dog owners can be fined up to €500 if they don’t walk their dogs at least three times a day. Turin has some of the most stringent animal protection rules in the world. They even ban fairgrounds from giving away goldfish in bags.
- It’s against the law to have a sleeping donkey in your bathtub after 7.00 pm in Arizona, USA.
- In Sarpourenx, France, it’s an offence to die without first buying a burial plot in a local cemetery. It’s not clear how this would be enforced though.

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

Steph James reflects on a model of great leadership.

“ Unless you’ve been living off the grid for the last few months, you’ve probably heard that Dr Ashley Bloomfield, the Director-General of Health, has resigned. And unless you’ve been living off the grid for the last two years (lucky you!), then you’ve probably heard of him before news of his resignation hit.

I’m sure many people over the next days, weeks, and months will share their reflections of Dr Bloomfield’s time as the Director-General. Near the start of the pandemic (although it didn’t seem like the start at the time), I had the privilege of working with Dr Bloomfield. Exactly how you’ve seen him on TV is how he is in real life. It takes a pretty special kind of leader to stop



and genuinely ask how people are and take the time to listen to their answers. This is all in between heading up press conferences, reading stacks of papers, meeting with ministers, and generally just doing more work than seems humanly possible. It takes a special kind of leader to walk the floors at 9.00 pm after a thirteen-plus hour day,* offer people snacks, and joke with them about the day’s challenges.

He has not only provided advice that has probably saved countless lives, and propelled public servants to heights never before seen by the general public, but has hopefully heralded a new generation of leaders and managers in the public service. One who can lead with humour, humility, and a deep sense

of compassion for the people that they manage and the wider community that they serve. And, importantly, one that steps aside gracefully to protect his own family and mental health when he needs to. And while we’ve all felt a range of emotions on hearing about his resignation, relief is high on that list – relief that it was he who led us through the last two years, relief that he stuck with us through the worst of it, and relief that now, when the time is right for him, he has chosen to step down.

He has made mistakes, as we all have, but as a relatively new manager, there are many lessons that can be learned from Dr Bloomfield’s leadership: most challenges can be worked through, and people will understand rules if they are explained in a way that is easy to understand yet not condescending (a real art form!). There’s a lot more to leadership than simply getting the job done, and people can tell when you are being genuine. You will make mistakes, but the most important thing is to gracefully admit to those mistakes and try to do better next time. I hope that I can one day be half the leader that he is, and inspire future public servants in the way that he certainly has.

Hopefully there are leaders and managers all over Aotearoa who are taking note and following in his footsteps. But he has left behind a model of leadership that can inspire us all.

* I saw reports of how he worked “12-hour days, 7 days a week” through most of the pandemic – this appears to me to be optimistic to say the least.

IPANZ is delighted to hear the views of IPANZ New Professionals

ELBOWING THROUGH THE CROWD

Ihlara McIndoe wants to see women at all levels of the public service, but she's troubled by a trend she sees among conversations about women in leadership.

“As a proud feminist, I jump at any opportunity to hear from women in leadership. I love a girl boss morning tea, hearing insights from senior women and sharing thoughts and questions relating to gender in the workplace with my peers. However, I query the emphasis of many events catered for early career women.* They often emphasise the idea that women just need to overcome their fears, get their “elbows on the table”, and push their voice forward in order to be successful leaders. I noticed, over a particular fortnight, two separate women in leadership who spoke with pride when reflecting on their behaviour that colleagues had called jarringly assertive with an occasional lack of empathy. The message seemed to be: *“It’s maybe something I should work on, but in the meantime, I’m the best at getting the job done, and that’s what really matters!”*”



I find such notions somewhat conflicting. On the one hand, I appreciate the feminist sentiment that women (in the home, the workplace, and the wider community) should not be left to carry the emotional labour alone. There’s certainly an element of the no-nonsense, “don’t mess with me” female professional character that I really admire – and many senior women who take this type of leadership approach (or some degree of it) are some of the most ardent feminists. But at some point, these attitudes surely depart from any intention to dismantle the patriarchy and instead contribute to the gate-

keeping structures that perpetuate patriarchal and colonial power. Assertive behaviour doesn’t naturally balance out the various systemic challenges that women in Aotearoa face. Furthermore, the women who can successfully “pull off” alpha-female attitudes in the workplace are arguably limited to those who are socially and culturally positioned most closely to the existing Pākehā male power structure.

At what point does an “elbows on the table” approach become an “elbow through the crowd” attitude, where colleagues are seen as competition rather than collaborators? I worry that the presentation of hyper-assertiveness as a key requirement for professional success disregards values of community, collective responsibility, manaakitanga, kotahitanga, and āwhina. I acknowledge that my relationship to concepts of power and hegemony is limited to my own experiences, and that principles of tikanga and te ao Māori are not my own to try to explain or give voice to, but as tangata Tiriti, I believe in their importance and prioritisation, and I hope to continually be challenged to contribute to these important conversations without taking up spaces that ought to go to others.

As I look towards a professional career that winds in and out of the public service, I think about the sort of leader I want to become. I am fortunate to have mentors who prioritise and model empathetic leadership. But I’ve also been made aware of the frustrations and challenges my female mentors have faced, often punctuated by fellow professional women whose attitudes mirror those of the patriarchy they are trying to dismantle. Perhaps the key thing these mentors have taught me is that being an effective worker and leader requires both strength and kindness. To prioritise care does not necessitate the diminishing of competence. Whatever one’s personal politics are, surely our prime minister serves as evidence that a female leader can be both strong and kind.

* And often their lack of recognition that gender is not a binary concept.



IPANZ is delighted to hear the views of IPANZ New Professionals

DISABLED PEOPLE HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR THEIR NEW MINISTRY

A new ministry will soon be established that will focus on the needs of disabled people. Sally Champion caught poliovirus when she was a child and has worked for MSD, Special Education (Ministry of Education), and the Disabled Persons Assembly. She investigates what the new ministry will mean and what it will need to achieve.

According to long-time disability leader Paul Gibson, the new Ministry for Disabled People can end ableism by appointing disabled leaders and improving the support system for disabled people.

The new Ministry for Disabled People will be set up in July 2022.

The chief executive and senior leadership team are still to be named, but the disability community waits and hopes they are disabled people.

Ableism is like racism or sexism

Paul says ableism is discriminatory attitudes and actions (like racism or sexism) toward disabled people.

Disabled people can have impairments, such as being sight impaired, hearing impaired, or physically impaired or they can have psychosocial (mental distress) issues or neuro-disability issues.



Paul Gibson

Paul was the Disability Rights Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission from 2011 to 2017. At the moment, he is bringing a disability perspective to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care as a commissioner.

Despite his career success, Paul says that he has often experienced ableism. He is blind with some peripheral vision. He says he struggled to complete his education and struggles to deliver work on time. This is because everything is set up for people who can see.

After university, having experienced ableism and seeing the need for change, he decided to become involved with disability self-advocacy groups, like the pan-disability Disabled Person's Assembly and other disabled people's organisations. He says these groups and others have gathered the views of disabled people and provided the government with advice for many years.

These groups have worked closely with successive governments on making change on disability issues, yet disability has always



Juliana Carvalho

been a low priority and change has been slow. Disabled people are now calling for political representation, autonomy, and leadership.

The importance of disabled leadership

He says disabled leadership is about the nuanced knowledge, pride, and identity that only disabled people have. And it's about leaders owning decisions.

"Leadership is about mana. Some disabled people who've talked to the Abuse in Care inquiry have told us that disabled people need to take leadership of the new ministry. They've said anything less would perpetuate their ongoing abuse and neglect.

"Social sector managers and MPs have a broad knowledge of disability, but it's disabled people who understand the issues. The ability of disabled people to speak and lead change on our behalf is so often underestimated."

Even though 24 percent of New Zealanders, 1.1 million of us, identify as having a long-term impairment, progress forward has been very slow.

The Enabling Good Lives programme

Government announcements say the new Ministry for Disabled People will roll out a transformation of how disabled people and whānau are supported. This transformation is called Enabling Good Lives (EGL), and it will roll out nationally as part of the new ministry's mandate to change policy and services. The programme started in Christchurch after the earthquakes in 2011.

The EGL approach is designed to give disabled people and whānau greater choice and control over their lives. Instead of people trying to find disparate disability support from across the public service, funding will be pooled from ministries such as Health, Education, and MSD.

DISABILITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LOW PRIORITY AND CHANGE HAS BEEN SLOW.

A new workforce will be developed, and connectors, or tūhono, will be available to help disabled people and whānau plan a good life, get access to personal assistance, and participate in the wider community.

Paul welcomes these changes. He says at the moment trying to find the personal assistance you need can feel like being tossed from pillar to post. Real choices are often missing because the eligibility criteria don't fit the diverse needs of disabled people.

Traditionally, personal assistance covers a wide range of help such as personal care, home help, equipment like hearing aids and wheelchairs, help for autistic children and children with developmental delays, prescription fees, and some heating costs.

Like everybody else, Paul says, disabled people need an adequate income. A lot of disabled people are on a benefit or work part-time, and research shows they often work in lower-paid jobs. (The average income for disabled people is lower than other disadvantaged groups.)

We are learning all the time, he continues, how inadequately addressed impairment affects people. In Australia, 89 percent of people in youth justice facilities have a neuro-disability. This figure is likely to be similar here. (A neuro-disability includes people with dyslexia, ADHD, head injury, autism, foetal alcohol syndrome, or learning disabilities.)

University of Auckland research shows disabled people face higher rates of violence and abuse than the rest of the population, and research suggests disabled people are three times more likely than others to experience sexual abuse.

"These are examples of the complex issues the Ministry for Disabled People will need to tackle," says Paul.

"We need to get the right support to participate. For disabled people to succeed, we need to gain better access to the wider world."

Creating access to life on a wider scale

The new ministry will also work to improve accessibility by introducing new accessibility legislation.

Accessibility refers to how easy it is for people to access the community, for example, through using buildings, public spaces, and transport; by getting access to information, products, and services online; as well as gaining access to education and employment.

The Access Alliance is a group of organisations from the disability and neuro-diversity sectors. It includes a range of business champions and nearly 7,000 individual supporters.

Since 2017, they have been active in encouraging the government to develop accessibility legislation. Their work is now being realised as legislation is to be introduced this year.

To encourage more New Zealanders to get involved in the development of the legislation, they have launched a campaign called Access Matters.

Juliana Carvalho is the Access Matters lead campaigner. She urges all those interested to make submissions when the Accessibility for all New Zealanders Bill is introduced in July and the select committee process starts.

"We need to demonstrate why this is so important for all of our society.

"We urge the government to bring disabled persons, seniors, and others with access needs to the table as soon as possible. They need to work in partnership with the government to shape this legislation for Aotearoa New Zealand."

In readiness for the select committee process, the campaign will develop an easy-to-use submission guide for people to report the daily barriers they face. They will also offer coaching and feedback to support individuals to make submissions. Contact can be made through their website: www.accessalliance.org.nz

RESEARCH SHOWS DISABLED PEOPLE FACE HIGHER RATES OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE THAN THE REST OF THE POPULATION.

"Our goal is that every New Zealander should be able to fully participate in society and have the opportunity to learn, to get a job, and to take part in the community," says Juliana.

Simple changes having big effects

She says the lives of disabled people can be profoundly affected by accessibility issues. A few months ago, she moved to Tauranga but wasn't able to find an accessible house to accommodate her wheelchair.

"I had to move into the best housing that was available. The shower here isn't accessible for me, so I've been using a makeshift shower outside in the garden."

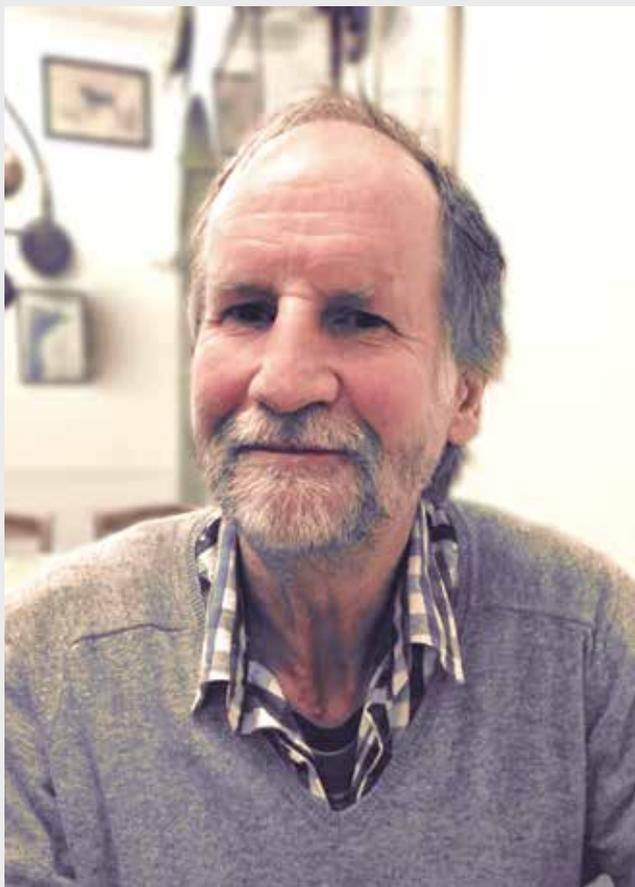
She says this sort of situation isn't uncommon for physically disabled people, and she feels her dignity as a person has been compromised and worries about her health now it's winter.

Although The Access Alliance hasn't seen the bill yet (it's still being drafted), Juliana says that to achieve real improvements to make New Zealand more accessible, it needs to be very specific.

Juliana says the proposed legislation needs to establish enforceable standards, provide for an independent regulator, create a notification and barrier identification system, and have an effective dispute resolution process.

She says getting this legislation right has huge potential for addressing inequality and for promoting social cohesion and economic growth, but the consequences of getting it wrong will take years to unwind.

"As our population grows and people live longer, the impact of accessibility barriers will increase. We cannot afford to let access barriers prevent people from participating fully and equally in society."



ROSS MACKAY (1951-2022)

A passionate and pioneering social researcher, mentor, and friend; social policy advisor Ross Mackay has left a huge legacy. Kathy Omler talks to people who knew him.

In 2018, after a 42-year career, Ross Mackay retired as a Principal Advisor for the Ministry of Social Development. In January this year, he passed away after a short illness.

Ross Mackay was mourned by his former workmates as “an all-time favourite colleague” who made a massive difference to New Zealand social policy.

Several colleagues contributed to a eulogy that highlighted the wealth and value of papers and studies Ross initiated and authored, most relating to his particular interests of families, poverty, child development, and social welfare.

Fellow principal advisor and long-time colleague David Rea said Ross’s thorough approach to research and evaluation was

pioneering, his thoughtful work made politicians sit up and take notice, and he was a respected mentor of younger staff.

Colleague Richard Bolton recalled Ross’s contribution to the deeper understanding of the impact of parenting style, family resilience, and the use of physical discipline on outcomes for children. “This was an important influence on the 2007 Crimes Act law change to prohibit use of physical force on children.

“At a critical time, Ross provided the select committee with the most beautifully clear, powerful, and persuasive synthesis of research on the impact of parenting styles on child development.”

In fact, Ross’s keen sense of social justice, and the need for child protection, had been evident from an early age. In 1969, writing as school dux in the Timaru Boys’ High magazine, he had this to say about corporal punishment:

“Amidst all the righteous indignation (regarding a mooted suggestion to introduce flogging) not one voice was heard protesting against corporal punishment that is legally condoned within schools. It seems the credo is beat our children by all means but hands off our thugs,” he railed.

Corporal punishment wasn’t banned until 1987, meanwhile Ross had turned to research in his desire to influence public policy and to make social change.

**THAT CAREFUL, SYSTEMATIC
READING OF RESEARCH IS
SOMETHING NEW GENERATIONS
COULD LEARN FROM ROSS. IT’S THE
FUTURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE.**

He started at the Department of Social Welfare in 1976 and worked across a range of research roles before becoming manager of the research section. He finished his career as a Principal Advisor.

Ross knew how to look at evidence and use it in a thoughtful manner to help shape public policy, says David.

“His forte was his use of research and evaluation to help support public policy in the welfare system, working to alleviate poverty and help people find jobs, and he was a particular specialist in the area of child protection and development.”

Ross was a pioneer in his approach to synthesising numerous research studies and accumulating the findings, he added.

“I think that was one of the key things he did. It’s not just picking out things that confirm your bias, but reading all the relevant studies in enough detail so you understand what they do and don’t find and being thoughtful about it all.

“That careful, systematic reading of research is something new generations could learn from Ross. It’s the future of social science.”

According to colleague Peter Alsop, Ross cared in equal measure about why things were as they were and what

would work to make things better. Peter Alsop lists several achievements – what he says Ross liked to call his anthology.

“Working with colleague and friend Bryan Perry, Ross was a force behind the establishment of the Growing Up in New Zealand Study, the country’s largest contemporary longitudinal study of child development.”

HE PUT AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF ENERGY INTO MENTORING AND HELPING YOUNGER STAFF.

This study tracks the lives of more than 6,000 Kiwi children, providing data for research, policy, and services to improve the wellbeing of all New Zealand children and their families.

“As the ministry’s representative, Ross also was a great supporter of the Roy McKenzie Centre, now homed at Victoria University,” says Peter.

The Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families and Children, Awahi Rito, is a philanthropic research initiative that aims to deepen knowledge of families and children through fundamental and applied research. Today the centre focuses on two key research areas: family context and child inequality and resilience in Māori whānau and Pacific families.

Ross greatly valued this government–academic collaboration, says Peter.

“He was instrumental in the development of the *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, a respected journal and forum for public debate on social policy, published from 1993 to 2011 by the Ministry of Social Development.

“He was also chair of the ministry’s Publications Committee, which bolsters the quality of research work.”

David says that Ross was a big supporter of making sure research and evaluation on key social policy issues got into the public domain. “He was a big supporter of transparency in that respect.”

He also made a great contribution abroad, says Peter. “He spent a year in Geneva working with leading academics, and he contributed to three books on welfare reform.”

David says looking at the New Zealand welfare system in an international context was particularly influential work achieved by Ross earlier in his career.

“A key point I want to make about Ross is how he supported and inspired many researchers and greatly influenced their careers.

“He was a great developer of other staff. Much of his enormous contribution to public policy was through helping others. His comments on other people’s papers were legendary, in that they were extremely well thought out, respectful, and always used the best evidence that was available. He was hugely respected by leading researchers who were often taken aback by his deep insights.

“In turn, he was respectful of junior staff. He put an enormous amount of energy into mentoring and helping younger staff with their work, which I think is a particularly important aspect of public service.”

As a person, Ross was a very engaging, humorous person to work with, says David.

“He had little time for flip charts, post-it notes, and passing fads about what words were in fashion,” adds Peter Alsop.

In his eulogy, Peter wrote about Ross’s willingness to stand up for what he thought was right, to stand behind work even if it was unpopular, his persistence, his loyalty, and his focus on the long game even with stumbles or roadblocks along the way.

Colleague Bryan Perry agrees. He recalls how in 1994, at the former Social Policy Agency, Ross instigated a study to deliver information on the growth of foodbanks in New Zealand, including the characteristics of foodbank users. This work provided a solid base for two *Social Policy Journal* articles on foodbanks.

“Ross’s original research was a factor leading to a number of changes, in December 1994, to the supplementary assistance programmes operated by the Income Support Service.

HE HAD LITTLE TIME FOR FLIP CHARTS, POST-IT NOTES, AND PASSING FADS ABOUT WHAT WORDS WERE IN FASHION.

“However, some senior managers had expressed displeasure about the research, querying why Ross would even want to highlight these matters. Ross replied ‘because that’s part of my job, to provide sound evidence to policy advisors and ministers – to enable them to make good decisions for the people for whom we have responsibility.’”

“The inspiration of Ross’s willingness and courage in ‘speaking truth to power’ has stayed with me to this day,” says Bryan.

Peter Alsop says common ingredients filtered across all of Ross’s achievements.

“He had a formidable intellect, was widely and deeply read, and had an amazing ability to make sense of evidence and communicate it in impactful ways. And he did it all in an admirable way.”

Like in his farewell speech, at his retirement party, which he finished not with any serious recommendations or sage advice, but with a rousing rendition of “O Sole Mio”, sung from the heart.

“This is the way in which I would like to sign off on my career,” he said.

Ross Mackay might have left the building, but his legacy remains. And that must be to the benefit of families and children and the social policies that safeguard them.



EYES ON THE WORLD

Seeyoung Choi reports on two new approaches in human resources. One comes from the OECD, which focuses on a new approach to data analysis, and the other reports on a survey done by a Boston consultancy, which sees a crisis in public sector human resources. (IPANZ is hosting Seeyoung from South Korea for six months.)

Data-driven human resources management: Enabling the strategic use of human resources data for a high-performing public service.

In this age of digital transformation, many public sector agencies in OECD countries try to utilise data for policy making, service delivery, organisational management, and innovation, particularly in the area of human resources. This trend is known as Data-driven Human Resources Management (DDHRM). The approach takes the premise that using a scientific and analytic approach will avoid the practices of the past that were often driven by decision makers' experiences or intuition.

The source of data

The 2016 Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central Governments of OECD Countries shows that human resource departments collect three types of data: administrative data, employee survey data, and performance data. Administrative data includes the number of employees, age, gender, pay data, turnover data, and so on.

Employee survey data includes employee perceptions of job satisfaction, employee motivation, and work-life balance. Performance data includes figures on employee performance. Interestingly, the survey showed there is relatively little performance data collected due to the difficulty of measuring performance objectively.

DDHRM creates opportunities in two main areas: forecasting and planning; and monitoring and evaluation.

1. Forecasting and planning

Workforce planning

Workforce planning is a dynamic process that ensures that the organisation has the right number of people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. DDHRM allows organisations to predict the long-term supply and needs of the workforce to achieve the organisation's strategic goals. By analysing the data related to workforce inflows and outflows, organisations can develop a strategic workforce plan to fill any skill gaps and strengthen their competitiveness.

Retaining top talent

The competitive labour market makes retaining top performers critical to organisational success. The voluntary turnover of core talent not only causes lost productivity and institutional knowledge but also costs in recruitment, learning, and development. A DDHRM approach allows organisations to search for the drivers of voluntary turnover, such as age, agency type, gender, salary level, geographical location, length of service, occupation type, pay plan, and work plans. Based on this analysis, human resource managers can design bespoke policies to attract the right employees.

Predicting inclusive leadership in the public service

DDHRM can be used to meet specific targets in diversity. For example, the Public Service Commission of New South Wales set a target of having 50 percent of women in senior roles by 2025. Using a DDHRM analysis, the Public Service Commission concluded that, to achieve the goal, the public sector needed six out of every ten senior appointments to be women, instead of the current four

out of ten. The data analysis showed the current deficiencies and offered a concrete way to achieve the goal.

2. Monitoring and evaluation

Data analysis can give instant feedback on the effectiveness of human resource policies and therefore reduce the time gap between implementation and evaluation.

Barriers to implementing DDHRM

According to the OECD report, there are key barriers to implementing a DDHRM approach: technical barriers, legal barriers, and human resource barriers. But at the same time, overcoming these barriers can be the key to adopting data-analysis practices.

1. Technical barriers

DDHRM can be effective only when scattered data from organisations' databases can be integrated. Securing data quality, such as standardisation of data format, must precede the analysis process. Moreover, for successful DDHRM, changing the way organisations collect and store information is critical. This includes introducing new IT systems such as cloud computing and changes to underlying business processes.

2. Legal barriers

Because data often includes employees' personal information, the DDHRM approach is intrinsically sensitive. Many OECD countries have strict regulations that protect employee privacy. Any possible breach of privacy can see the loss of credibility, employee satisfaction, and engagement in data collection.

3. Human resource barriers

The competencies for using a DDHRM approach include IT-related techniques, statistical knowledge, and a "storytelling" ability to convey the insights in plain language. Few human resource departments hold all these competencies, and many government agencies hire data scientists and develop data analytics training to increase data capacity among employees.

(To find out more on this report, see <https://doi.org/10.1787/059814a7-en>)

Creating people advantage in the public sector

Boston Consulting Group (BCG) conducted a survey in 2014 called Creating People Advantage. It surveyed more than 400 government human resource leaders. It diagnosed the current state of human resources in the public sector and compared this with the private sector. It concluded that a crisis exists in public sector human resources and recommended steps for reform.

Public sector human resource management must constantly adjust to complex and unpredictable environments. Most government agencies are dealing with the contradictory pressures of smaller budgets and increasing expectations. When comparing the public and private sectors, the survey found that the public sector is less data-driven. For example, the public sector is less inclined to use key performance indicators to boost productivity or manage personnel costs. The same goes for using data management systems and organising dedicated analytic teams.

The report suggests three challenges to public sector human resources. First, the public sector is limited by strict rules in terms of dismissing staff, promoting staff, redeploying staff, and using incentives. Second, the public sector has limited flexibility because of the higher proportion of employees over fifty, poor relationships with unions, and fragmented government organisations. Third, public sector agencies must consider multiple missions related to a variety of citizens, something that the private sector doesn't have to consider.

In spite of these challenges, the report suggests three ways to transform public sector human resource management.

1 Ensuring efficiency and connecting with stakeholders

Human resource functions must be reviewed to focus on the core tasks. This will often require redesigning processes and reorganising functions through using IT tools and data analysis and by connecting with other public sector agencies.

Building strong connections with internal stakeholders and management is vital. This means that human resources data should be shared transparently with stakeholders and there should be solid channels of communication with agency leaders.

Having a strong partnership with unions will always help with any transformation because unions can provide insights about potential obstacles to change based on their knowledge of the realities facing the people who are actually doing the work.

2. Acting as a strategic partner with the overall organisation

Having Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) is essential to ensure that human resource policies and decisions are in line with the organisation's needs and overall strategy. SWP prevents decisions that take a short-sighted view and takes account of the skills and roles that will be required in the future.

When organisations are under budget constraints and facing changing skill requirements, human resources must provide a package of tools (budgeting, training, mobility) to support operational teams. These tools need to include defining the scope of control and the best ways of communicating information. Human resources should also initiate changes like the consolidation of teams and the redeployment of staff to new roles.

3. Building the right capabilities

Human resource departments need to offer flexible options, such as employee transfers and exchanges. This flexibility has multiple benefits, including increasing staff engagement and loyalty and matching talent supply and demand.

Recruitment means more than attracting talented people – it also means building a strong employer brand and retaining top talents. Employer branding includes the degree of gender equality in the organisation and the opportunities for minorities and disabled staff, as well as the organisational culture.

Development and training should be tailored to the needs of each employee. This is especially so for leadership positions, where incumbents may need training to develop complementary capabilities such as operational, strategic, and communication skills. There needs to be more efficient ways to deliver training programmes. These include utilising in-house trainers and using existing programmes from successful well-organised private companies.

Government agencies need to design an ambitious and structured talent-management process. Talent-management programmes should provide top-performers with appropriate compensation and clearly identified career paths.

Public sector human resource teams need to strengthen their external relationships with subcontractors to allow them to respond to the seasonal spikes in demand. A solid, long-term connection with the external workforce can enhance work quality. Using talented technology-oriented freelancers can also speed up the development of digital tools. Also, these relationships can avoid redundancy and better manage the peaks in labour demand.

(To find out more on this report, see www.bcg.com)

STRENGTHENING TODAY’S REFORMS

David Lovatt, Public Sector Partner at Deloitte New Zealand, reports on a major investigation on reforms in public services and shares his insights on which reforms are working and which aren’t.

Deloitte New Zealand published our State of the State 2022 report *Moving Mountains* in May, exploring perspectives on government and public sector-led reform in Aotearoa and what makes for successful – and unsuccessful – large-scale, cross-sector, multi-year change. In writing the report, our team had the absolute privilege of interviewing more than twenty politicians, public servants, Māori leaders, academics, and researchers. Their insights helped us to develop our recommendations, as well as a framework for reform.

We asked our interviewees to reflect on successful and unsuccessful reforms, the characteristics of reforms that largely achieved their intended outcomes, and those that didn’t. Most struggled to think of recent reforms that were successful – instead, many spoke of the success of less recent reforms, including reforms to the Reserve Bank, the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s, and the Auckland SuperCity reforms of more than a decade ago.

More recent reforms were seen as being less successful, because they don’t achieve their intended outcomes. Some commented that

while there are very many current reforms to consider, few have been completed, so it is too early to say whether they have been successful or not. That said, there’s always an opportunity to pause and reflect on improvements that could be made, or different choices that could be considered, as the current wave of reforms plays out.

In this article, we take our *Moving Mountains* framework, findings, and recommendations and explore some emerging characteristics of the current generation of reforms, including those in health, water supply and treatment, climate, housing, and vocational education, based on published and public information. We then draw some insights and suggest how aspects of current reform programmes could be strengthened or redesigned.

A framework for reform

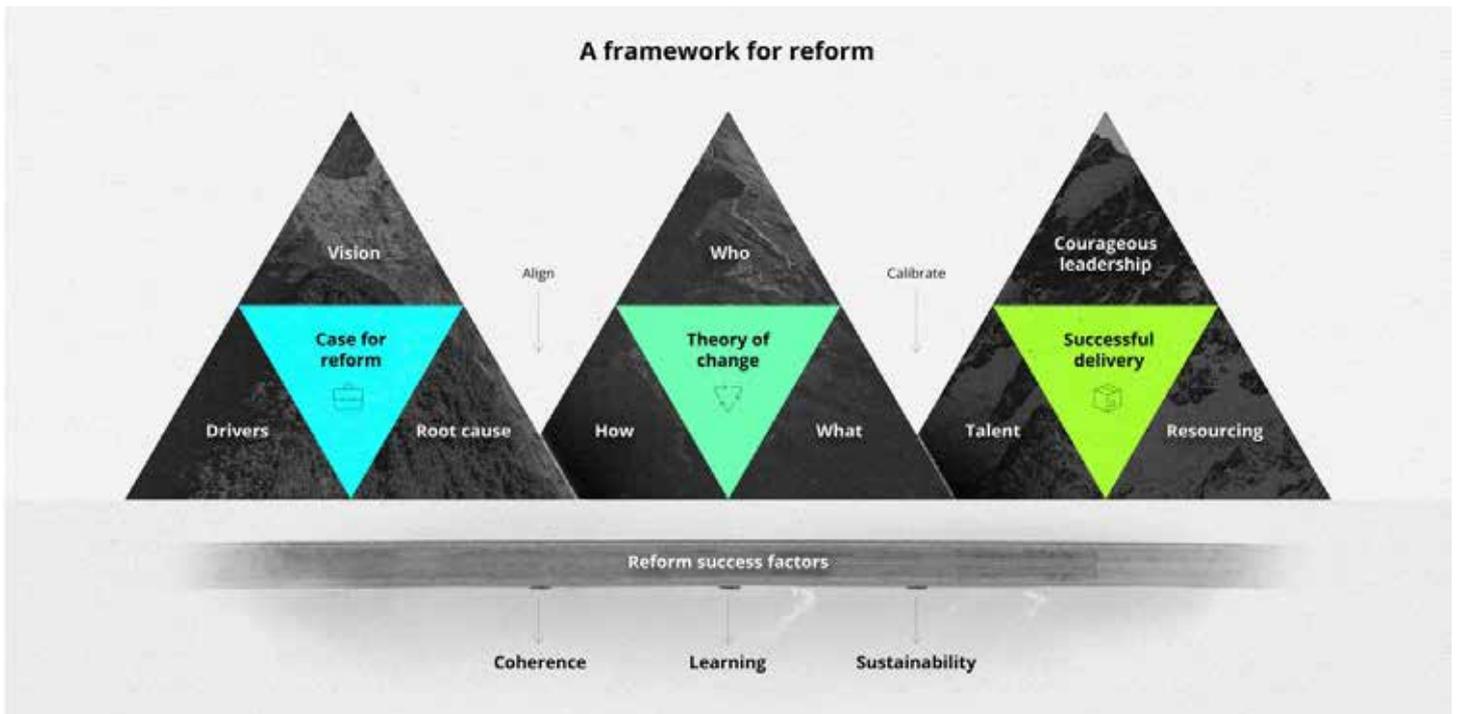
Whatever the nature, focus, and extent of reform, all reform stories include three key dimensions:

- **Case for reform:** Whether reform drivers are failures in the current system or

shifts in the operating environment, the case for reform sets out compelling analysis of what is preventing the current system from working as it should and gives a clear vision for what the future outcomes need to be.

- **Theory of change:** A collective view on how sustainable reform will happen in the system. Who needs to change, what needs to change, what levers are most effective, and how will we know when that change is working effectively? This is often informed by history – a deep understanding of how change has happened before, or how it has not.
- **Successful delivery:** A coherent programme of changes that creates the future capabilities of the system and the decommissioning of the previous system. This requires a skilled team and strong, courageous leadership to go on the journey, as well as a method to engage and collaborate with system participants at all levels along the way.

This framework can help us with the conversation about reform and how to do



it better: are we clear about the case for reform, have we been explicit about how the change we're proposing will enable better outcomes, and do we have all the ingredients in place for successful delivery?

So how do our recent and current reforms rate against the framework we have developed?

Stronger on vision, lighter on root causes

Current reforms are doing reasonably well at outlining the vision and drivers for reform. This can often be challenging in New Zealand's dominant paradigm of politically sponsored, centrally led, and public service delivered reform, which can sometimes fail to build a shared perspective around the need for change across a wider community of influencers, stakeholders, and decision makers.

To some extent, this is due to the current government's focus on performing a large number of reviews in its first term of office, which allowed the time for an exploration of the challenges facing Aotearoa New Zealand. The time to explore creates space for a well-reasoned, well-communicated case for change that can be missed in more rapid reform timelines.

(The large number of reviews undertaken from 2018–2020 is also one reason why we are in the midst of so many reforms at the moment, as most reviews – not all however – have led to reforms or at least large change programmes.)

But are we doing enough to really understand the root problems that cause systems and sectors to “fail” or be so broken that reform is the only course of action?

Example: Health Reform (2021)

The New Zealand Health and Disability System Review (2018–2020) chaired by Heather Simpson gave rise to the current health reform (announced 2021). Few reforms benefit from a three-year period of deep review and reflection – the earlier Auckland SuperCity reform was another – and the work done by the review panel and its associated advisors and working groups, including engagement with communities and key actors across the sector, did much to build a momentum behind the need for large-scale change.

While the vision and drivers of health reform have been identified, explained, and are well supported, there remains a question about whether the root causes and associated symptoms of health systems failure are being addressed. These

include rampant cost escalation; pressure from new technologies and treatment methodologies; significant un-served demand impacting on quality of life; persistent inequities and poorer health outcomes for Māori and Pacific people; an excess of resources tied up in expensive and infrastructure-heavy hospital services leading to a lack of resources in primary, community, and mental health; and a worn-out and undervalued workforce that depends on overseas workers to fill vacancies.

There is strong support for this reform, and a well-argued case, but none of our interviewees believed this will be the last-ever health reform that would once-and-for-all fix the underlying issues that plague the health system. It may be that more work is required to drill down to, and reform, the root causes.

Theory of change is not clearly explained

Among the reforms we looked at, the theory of change was the weakest point of current practice when measured against our framework: the “who”, “how”, and “what” needs to change in order to realise the vision. It sounds simple, but it rarely is.

Traditional levers such as structure, rules, and incentives are still critical tools in defining and driving behaviours. These levers also have the advantage of being tangible and measurable, and arguably, we know how to pull these levers. As a result, many reforms deploy changes to the legislation, institutions, organisational structures, responsibilities, resources, and funding in order to bring about change. But this is rarely enough.

The kinds of complex systems that exist across sectors and institutions that serve the public have substantial inertia, and their behaviour emerges from within. We make the argument in our report that there is a need for more networked and distributed models of reform: consideration should be given to who can – and should be able to – pull the appropriate reform levers.

Foundational to this collaborative approach is a need for explicit and shared perspectives on how the proposed interventions will change the system and drive better outcomes for Aotearoa. Reforms that default to pulling, pushing, or resetting traditional levers may find it much harder to deliver effective, sustainable change.

Example: Reform of Vocational Education (2019)

The Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) brought about many important changes

to the shape of the vocational education sector, including merging sixteen institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) into a new, single entity (Te Pūkenga); creating Workforce Development Councils, Regional Skills Leadership Groups, Centres of Vocational Excellence, and Taumata Aronui; and reallocating responsibilities across the system.

While the legislative and structural changes are now in place, other aspects of the reform are still underway. For example, a new unified funding model to go with the reform is still to be implemented. Subsidiary ITPs are now starting to be absorbed into Te Pūkenga.

In addition, it is difficult to connect the changes the public has seen and heard about – many of which were controversial and strongly protested by regional representatives – with the “why” of the reform: the issues that were driving pre-reform system problems including institutional failures and a need for more consistent and improved learner outcomes.

This is not a criticism of the reform. But a clearer exposition of the change levers being used, showing how individually and together they are intended to reform the system and enable better outcomes and where the responsibility sits for delivering ongoing change, is crucial for the public to support the reform and understand the “who”, “how”, and “what”.

For long-running reforms, such as RoVE and the health reform, ongoing accountability and visibility of the change programme and its results should be shared with sector leaders, affected communities, and stakeholders for as long as fundamental changes are underway. This also helps reformers to demonstrate the impact they are having, rather than have the reform fade away into business-as-usual, as so often happens.

Strengthening reform

As we face many years of reform in health, Three Waters, housing, and climate, it is important that we learn from the past and get the most value from our riskiest, most resource-intensive, and complex change programmes across the public sector. If we can strengthen reforms through a deeper understanding of the root causes and through clearer communication of how planned changes will drive improved outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand, we'll be much better placed to deliver on these big opportunities for a better future.



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