



Tairawhiti Community Commissioning

*A Proposal for
Community-Led Commissioning
in Tairawhiti*

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Prepared by the
Tairawhiti Community Commissioning Working Group

A Shared Vision of a Thriving and Prosperous Tairawhiti

Tairawhiti iwi, communities, service providers, local and central government, and community organisations share a common aspiration: that all our people enjoy a high quality of life at every stage of their lives.

At the heart of this vision is a thriving future for the families and tamariki mokopuna of Tairawhiti, living in safe homes and healthy environments, participating in outstanding learning opportunities, accessing support when needed, working in jobs that enable them to be productive and earn incomes that improve their standard of living and life choices, supported by strong cultural and social infrastructure, and a resilient and inclusive local economy. It is a future where most people are able to contribute positively to a region that is resilient, vibrant and a responsible contributor to our nation.

In this future, decision-making sits close to the people it affects, communities are strong and self-determining and less reliant on social services. Tairawhiti becomes the exemplar of “whanau at the centre”, solutions-focused leadership, outcomes-driven action, innovation and intergenerational wellbeing.

In Tairawhiti, we have long championed community-led solutions including community commissioning, implemented local commissioning and led the nation in community collaboration and evidence on social services barriers. We have engaged with successive governments on devolved decision rights and delivery models that are responsive to the needs, conditions and circumstances of Tairawhiti families and place control closer to those affected. When the Social Investment Agency announced a community commissioning pathway, community and iwi leaders saw strong alignment between regional strategies and government goals.

Our vision for community commissioning is that over time all decision-making over Crown social wellbeing spending in Tairawhiti sits with our community. Where the impact of that investment, estimated at \$1.5b annually, ~\$900m of which is spent in-region (not including direct benefit transfers), is multiplied by iwi, philanthropic and private co-investment to create an integrated commissioning system, designed around the needs and strengths of whanau.

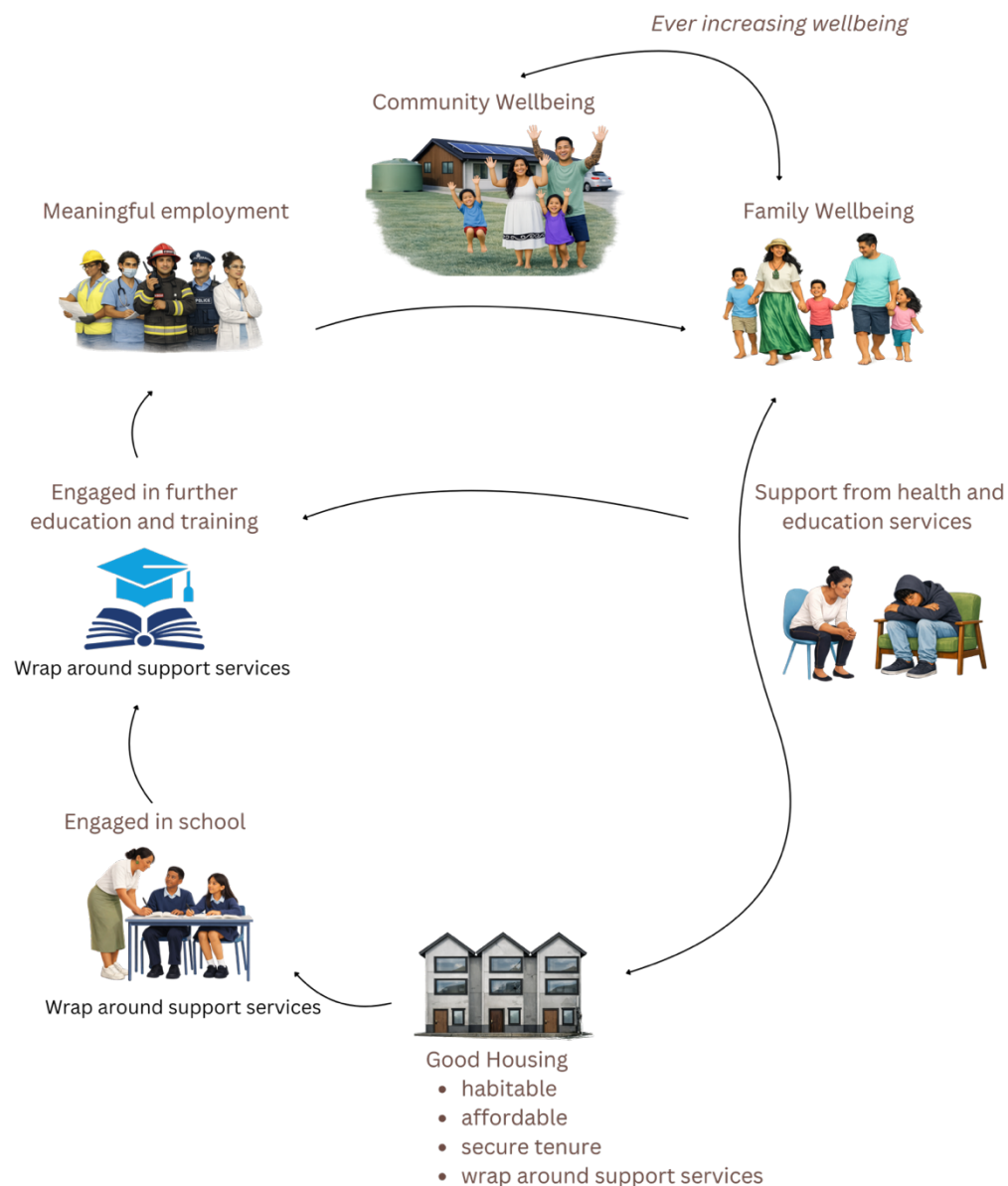
We have a proven track record of regional collaboration, innovation and delivery. When the system has enabled flexibility, we have been able to accelerate both uptake and uplift. Transformation is necessary because Crown contracted service providers struggle to make the changes required, and the current system limits our ability to harness whanau and regional strengths and improve wellbeing. We are ready as a region to use our knowledge and experience to commission services that demonstrably improve wellbeing for families.

The value proposition for our region is immense and quantifiable. Community commissioning provides an opportunity to target investments to where they are most impactful and improve accountability systems that hold partners accountable not just for financial probity, but for delivering on agreed results and outcomes. We will all share the rewards of the wellbeing increases that result from our collective work. We invite the government and other funders to partner with us to see our collective vision fulfilled

Diagram 1.0 The Wellbeing Cycle: this diagram sets out how whanau and community wellbeing continues to improve when the right building blocks, like secure housing, engagement in education and meaningful employment are in place. This wellbeing cycle is a visual representation of our proposed investment strategy.

THE WELLBEING CYCLE

First opportunity to change the trajectory



This would be our investment strategy - investing in root causes to stop the upstream impacts of tenuous housing and lack of education attendance.

\$s = greater impact, positive upwards cycle and less dependency on govt, and contribution to GDP

Summary of the Proposal

Tairawhiti Community Commissioning (TCC) is committed to establishing a Tairawhiti commissioning model based on three key components:

- **A single community-owned regional commissioning entity** with independent governance and professional backbone office.
- **A comprehensive investment approach** prioritising whanau wellbeing, addressing root-causes of poor wellbeing, and holistic, whole-of-life service design.
- **A powerful data and evidence system** centred on whanau voice that provides visibility across the full investment pathway, from investment and cost, through to outcomes and impact. It includes near-real time data collection and supporting evidence-based decision-making, resource allocation and continuous improvement.

An independent, community-owned, charitable company has been established to undertake commissioning in the region, alongside other social wellbeing focused responsibilities. TCC will be highly functional and professional, with a strong governance structure and a skilled backbone office delivering transparency and rigour to the commissioning process.

This approach is the maturation of a decades-long, iwi-led drive for service devolution - from a “coalition of the willing” (e.g., Manaaki Tairawhiti model) with limited decision-making, to a fully community owned, decision-making entity. TCC brings deep regional, national and public sector relationships to a co-operative commissioning ecosystem. More can be read about the structure and operation of TCC in Part Four: People, Structure and Timeline to Implementation.

We invite the government and other funding partners to collaborate with us to:

- Work toward community commissioning of all social-wellbeing investment in Tairawhiti – beginning with available Crown funding, expanding scope over time, alongside co-investment from other funders
- Achieve improvements in housing, health, education and employment and correlated reductions in addictions and family violence
- Build a model with the scale and longevity to support comprehensive whanau solutions and greater independence
- Evolve and maintain a data system that democratises information, drives accountability and supports continuous improvement
- Increase investment in resilience and wellbeing for families and communities, reducing crisis response spending over time
- Invest in comprehensive workforce development that enhances local capability
- Commit to transferring benefits and lessons learned to improve Crown systems
- Ensure TCC has decision-making input into all relevant Crown services

To secure long-term sustainability, we will seek long-term asset transfer and ongoing research and development capability from government to TCC.

Neither TCC as a commissioning entity, nor any aspect of the community commissioning process is intended to replace, fulfil, nor otherwise shift responsibility in relation to the Tiriti partnership between iwi and hapu of Te Tairawhiti and the Crown. This includes but is not limited to Treaty settlement redress, Crown obligations under all articles of Te Tiriti and any Tiriti obligations contained in relevant legislation.

Part One: How Commissioning Will Work in Tairawhiti

Our Commissioning Approach

We will replace services designed around narrow, pre-determined criteria with a model where whanau voice, data and insights shape priority setting, service design and delivery, definitions of success, and accountability.

At the highest level, we are proposing a commissioning system that delivers better outcomes for Tairawhiti families, better value for public, private and philanthropic investment, and better decision-making grounded in evidence, local knowledge and ultimate accountability to whanau and communities.

Diagram 2.0 Whanau at the centre



Initial Commissioning Priorities

Our initial commissioning priorities are based on what we see as the foundations of a good life, housing, education, health and employment:

- **Housing** – stable, affordable housing as the base for all wellbeing outcomes
- **Education support** – attendance, learning support, and engagement for tamariki and rangatahi
- **Community health services** – primary and preventive health, reaching those most disengaged from the system
- **Employment support** – pathways to meaningful, sustainable employment.

These are doorways through which whanau can access a wide range of integrated support. Where issues of family violence, addictions, basic health needs or financial management arise, support will be available either directly from, or connected through, housing, health, and education providers. Our model is relationship-based and whanau-centred.

Our strategic priorities for the next 3-5 years for commissioning

More broadly than the purchase of services in priority areas, our strategic priorities for the next-five years are proposed to be:

- **Enhance the commissioning system** – establish effective long-term governance, develop policy, process and practice, evolve data infrastructure, strengthen partnerships and relationships, secure long-term investment
- **Invest in holistic, whanau-led wellbeing, prevention and long-term prosperity** – optimise current wellbeing spending, embed long-term, wellbeing-outcomes-based investment strategy, establish effective whanau and community engagement, increase investment in prevention, commission services in priority areas
- **Enable providers to deliver holistic, integrated services for whanau** – remove constraints on holistic provider practice, minimise complexity in the community commissioned service system, enable broader service coverage, enable integrated, cross-sector responses to whanau needs and aspirations
- **Strengthen iwi and community leadership** – build community shareholding, embed effective shareholder decision-making, establish effective whanau and community engagement, grow non-government investment
- **Build work force capability and capacity** – identify strengths and gaps, reinforce providers with capacity and capability for integrated, holistic, whanau centred delivery, develop long-term work force capability strategy, secure workforce capability investment, create opportunities for leadership from the workforce
- **Scale-up data and insights infrastructure** – secure investment for scale-up, embed ethical data and insights strategy, policy and practice, improve data and insights accessibility for whanau and community.

We note TCC will take on broader responsibilities than commissioning, including the roles and responsibilities of a Place Based Initiative¹ Our overall strategic goals in our initial Strategic Plan reflect these broader responsibilities.

¹ Place Based Initiatives are government funded. PBIs make local, collaborative and evidence-informed decisions to address social issues experienced within an area. PBIs provide tools for communities to identify where their investments will have the most impact.
<https://www.sia.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/SIA-PBI-final-July-2017.pdf>

What Community Commissioning Will Change

Moving from a centralised government model to a community commissioning model will produce concrete, measurable shifts:

Current State	Community Commissioning
Decisions made in Wellington	Decisions made in Tairawhiti, close to whanau
Output-based contracting	Outcome-based commissioning
Provider led relationships	Whanau at the centre with more choices
Siloed service provision	Integrated, holistic wraparound support
Complex, high-overhead systems	Streamlined, efficient commissioning
Narrowly defined eligibility criteria	Needs-based, data-informed targeting
Limited whanau choice and voice	Whanau at centre of priority setting, service evaluation and provision
Short-term contracts limiting innovation	Long-term contracts enabling systems change with mutually agreed off-ramps
Data held by central agencies	Democratised data accessible to whanau and community

Our Investment Approach

Investment Principles

Principle	What This Means in Practice
Whanau at the centre	Whanau priorities, service specifications and provider preferences, captured in the wellbeing plan, inform commissioning decisions, service selection, design, and accountability. Whanau have more choice of service and define success.
Wellbeing outcomes, not outputs	Contracts focus on measurable changes in whanau lives, not counting service transactions.
Scale and longevity	Commissioning trusted providers with proven track records of service delivery, with capability and capacity to provide wrap-around services.
Flexibility and integration	Contracts will not restrict providers from navigating the full-service ecosystem, addressing risks, and delivering holistic support.
Comprehensive ecosystem	A full range of support mechanisms accessible across all parts of the region including rural and isolated communities.
Co-investment	We will pursue active relationships with co-commissioners (including Crown), iwi, and the philanthropic sector to multiply impact and align investment.
Equity of access	Services accessible to all whanau across the region, recognising high rurality and geographic isolation.

Accountability: Real-Time, Transparent and Whanau-Led

TCC is committed to full transparency of activities and spending, in as near to real time as possible – to and between whanau, providers, government, co-investors, and the public. Accountability is not just about fiscal probity; it is fundamentally about successful outcomes for whanau.

Every organisation and actor within the community commissioning “ecosystem” will be expected to take a genuinely joined-up approach, recognising the interconnected social support ecosystem where health, housing, justice and other social outcomes are inseparable.

Our Accountability Framework

The framework will:

- Require transparency for all parties, including in near -real time where possible
- Focus on improving the lives of whanau, grounded in what whanau value
- Operate relationally and non-hierarchically – horizontally between peers and vertically from providers to whanau to TCC to government, and equally from government back to Tairawhiti
- Balance fiscal probity with accountability for outcomes achievement
- Embed continuous improvement through learning loops, financial and outcomes reporting, and internal and external audits
- Apply equitable measures of success to both community-commissioned and Crown services
- Actively monitor performance, identify success and manage under-achievement.

The Urungi Data Platform: The Foundations of Our Real-Time Accountability Engine

Urungi, already operational in Tairawhiti, is a purpose-built database capturing whanau voice, categorising need types, recording system responses, and tracking outcomes. It provides the foundation for our real-time accountability and continuous improvement system and is ready to be scaled to support full community commissioning.

Urungi represents a significant existing asset. It was initiated by Manaaki Tairawhiti with comparatively limited resources and is already well developed. Work is underway to evolve Urungi from a relational to a graph-based database, enabling us to understand both individual whanau experiences and the systemic patterns shaping those experiences.

In addition, Trust Tairawhiti operates the Tairawhiti Wellbeing Survey, an annual point-in-time collection of community wellbeing data that supports investment decisions at Trust Tairawhiti and elsewhere. Key organisations including TCC, Trust Tairawhiti, Gisborne District Council and Tairawhiti Toitu Te Ora Iwi Maori Partnership Board have agreed to collaborate on a regional data-sharing model.

Data Sources and Interoperability

Our evidence system will draw on:

- Urungi — whanau voice and service response tracking
- Tairawhiti Wellbeing Survey — annual community wellbeing data
- Provider data systems

- Participating iwi data
- Statistics NZ and the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI)
- Crown agency lead and lag data sets
- National and international research and evidence.

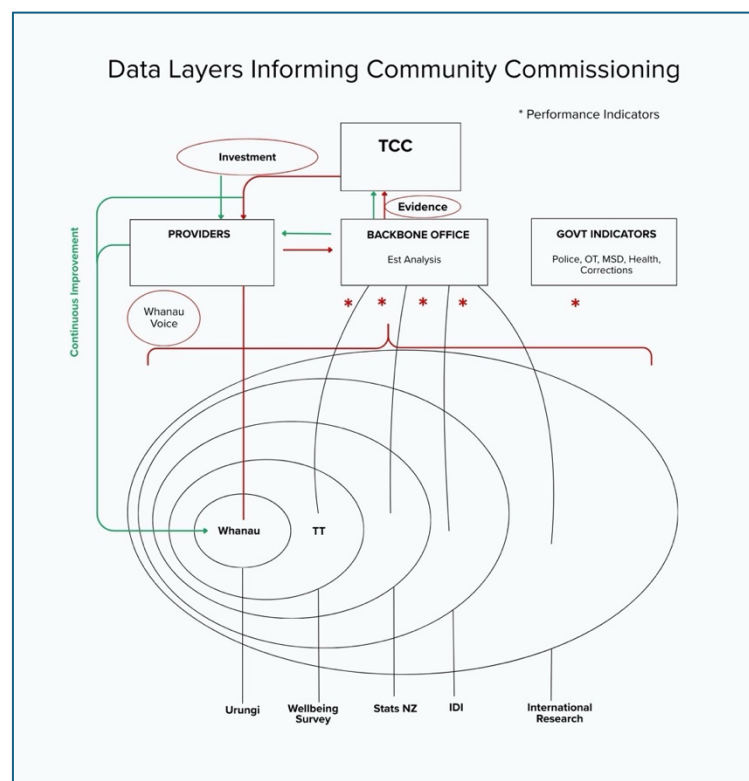
We will also expand data collection to capture whanau strengths and what works in service delivery – not just need and deficit – to inform commissioning that builds on what is already succeeding. We will continue to investigate how emerging technologies can support wellbeing investments.

Data Sovereignty and Privacy

Whanau will have full transparency on data and insights about themselves stored in our systems, and access to data sets supporting their own decision-making. The privacy of individuals and whanau will be protected and their data used only with explicit consent.

We will abide by the principles of Maori data sovereignty set out by Te Mana Raraunga: The Maori Data Sovereignty Network, and apply these as an ethical standard for the treatment of all Tairawhiti data.

Aggregated data and insights will be publicly available, supporting robust public accountability and enabling whanau, communities and organisations to make informed decisions for their own and regional wellbeing.



Part Two: Our Value Proposition

Wellbeing Framework

Tairawhiti Community Commissioning has adopted the definitions of wellbeing from He Rangitapu He Tohu Ora, a Tairawhiti community wellbeing framework developed by Trust Tairawhiti through extensive community engagement.

Wellbeing in Tairawhiti is defined as:

"Our people, whanau and communities of Tairawhiti are able to live the lives we value in ways that matter to us."

Whanau / Families: Whanau have choices and are supported, connected and able to live the lives they value. Families are resilient in times of challenge, care for each other today and set up future generations to thrive².

Hapori / Communities: Communities are healthy, happy and empowered.

Ohanga / Economy: The economy is diverse, innovative, resilient and regenerative. Our people have sustainable livelihoods.

Tuhono / Relationships: Our people and communities have respectful, connected and collaborative relationships.

Tutangata / Cultural Identity: Culture connects the people of Tairawhiti; we express, celebrate and value our diversity, heritage and taonga.

Taiao / Environment: Land, water, air and biodiversity are pristine and abundant. We practise kaitiakitanga.

Matauranga / Knowledge: Diverse systems of knowledge and matauranga Maori are accessible, utilised and valued.

Needs, aspirations, barriers, root causes and responses - a complex system

Tairawhiti families want to feel safe at home, have good jobs and income, get a good education, be able to access health support when they need it, and stay connected to the community that makes Tairawhiti home and the culture that anchors its people.

From 4+ years of direct whanau voice data, collected through the Manaaki Tairawhiti Navigators prototype, we know whanau want:

- to know what door to go through to get help
- for those working with them to understand their situation, culture and story, do what they say they will do, and not rush or judge them
- to not have to fit a criteria and know how long it will take to get help
- to be kept informed and give feedback on their plans.

Manaaki Navigators Prototype

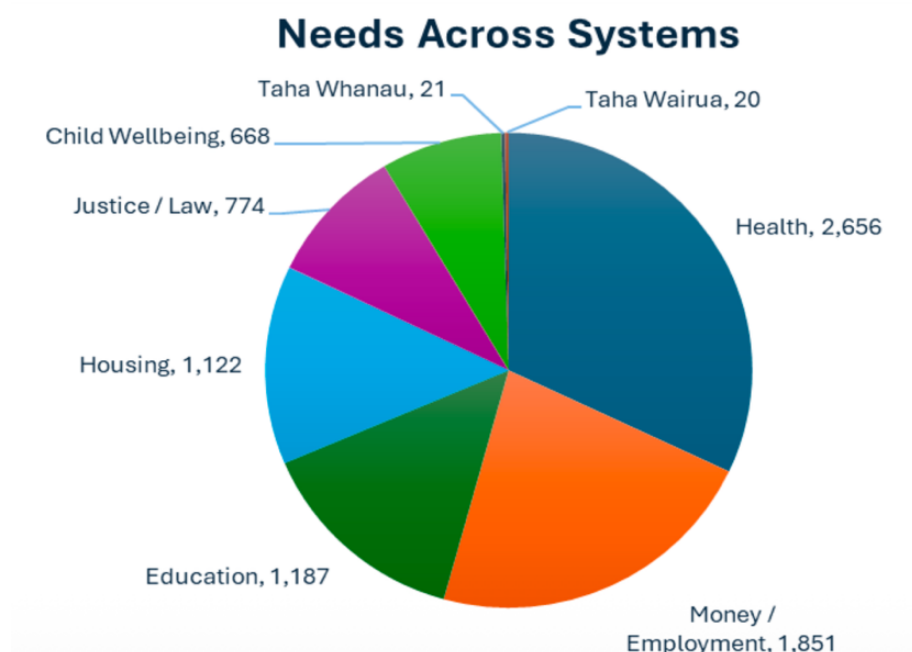
A five-year initiative embedded navigators in iwi and community organisations to support whanau with complex needs, using a “whatever it takes” approach, while capturing real-time insights on system barriers. The Prototype involved 31 navigators, 14 providers and supported

^{2 2} “Whanau / Families” is not a wellbeing definition in the Tairawhiti Wellbeing survey. This has been specifically added for community commissioning.

1,561 whanau. Urungi (explained in the previous section) data shows early, trusted support prevents crises, reduces repeat demand and builds confidence in local services.

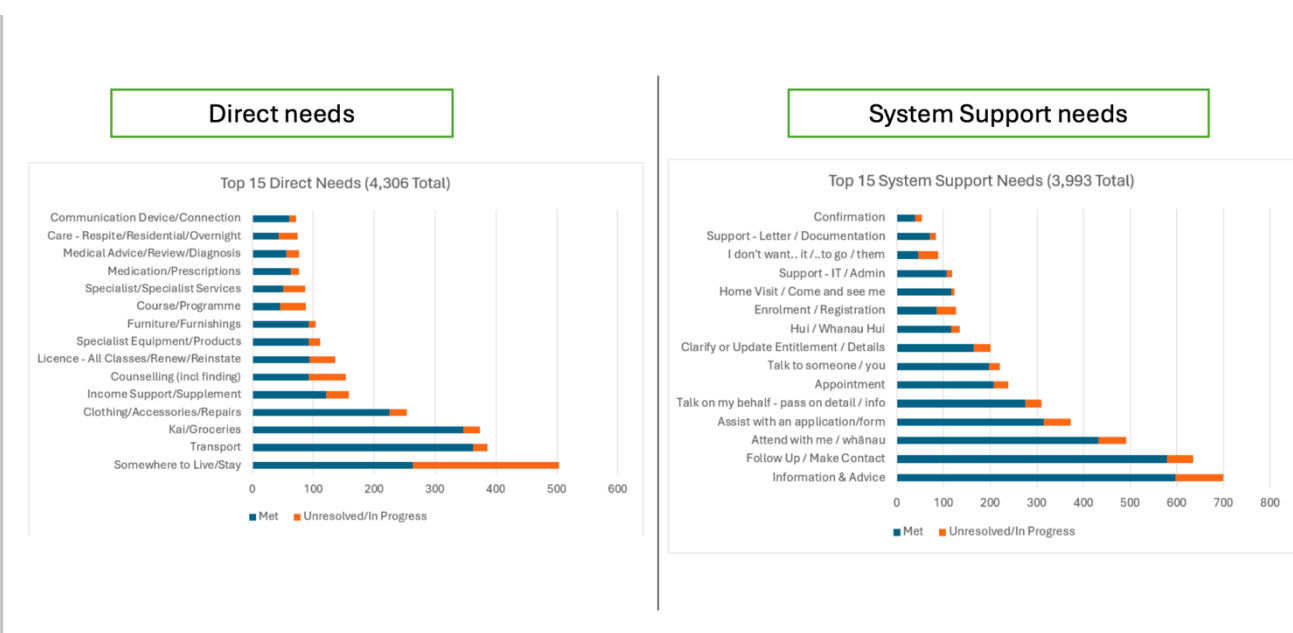
What does the Urungi data tell us?

Between 2019 and 2025 Urungi recorded 8,299 whanau needs, 6,780 barriers to those needs being met and 12,029 responses to those needs. **Diagram 3.0** below gives a breakdown of the 8,299 recorded needs by “system”.



Across 1,561 whanau: 49.5% had health needs, 43.8% income, 30.7% housing, 27.7% education — 5.3 different needs per whanau on average. Just over half recorded needs were direct (e.g., medication); just under half were “system support” needs showing that the system itself is a barrier.

Diagram 3.1 Direct and system support needs by category



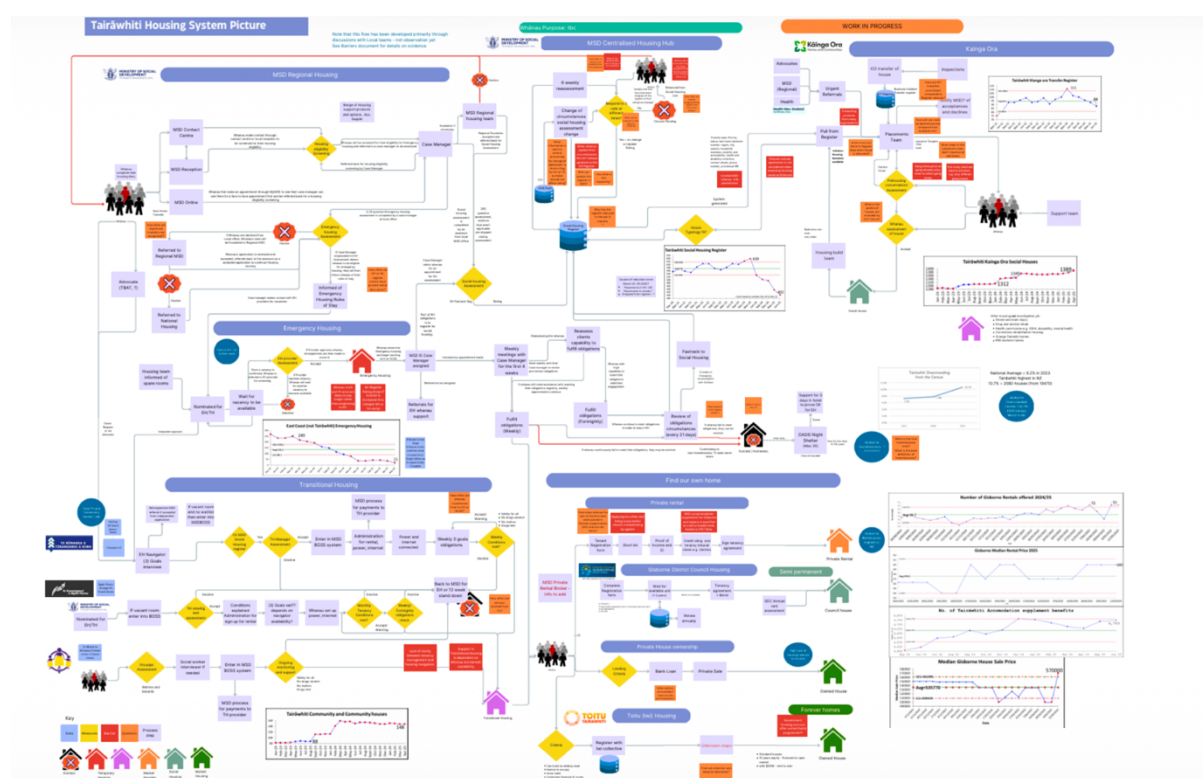
Importantly, Urungi data shows most whanau disengage from support once needs are met. Barriers to needs being met were highest in health, followed by income, housing and education.

Scope for systems improvement

As mentioned, just under half the needs recorded in Urungi were system support needs. These include things like information and advice needs, help with documentation required to access services and support for attendance at appointments.

The diagram below is a system map of the Tairāwhiti housing system. Even without the detail being readable, the diagram shows a compelling image of system complexity. Manaaki Tairāwhiti has mapped multiple systems with similar complexities.

Diagram 3.2 Tairāwhiti Housing System Picture



Despite compelling evidence, siloed Crown systems, have made few changes. For a \$1.5b investment, outcomes should be better. There is considerable scope for system improvement that could be achieved through community commissioning.

Wellbeing Goals and Key Statistics

Area & Goals	Key Statistics (Current Baseline)
Material Hardship - Reduce the proportion of the population with severe or material hardship rating for deprivation by 5% over 10 years. - Increase workforce participation by 5% over 10 years.	34.1% of Tairāwhiti residents live in the 10% most deprived areas nationally >3,600 households (10,800+ residents) rated "materially deprived" 8,100 households (24,000+ residents) have a "severe" deprivation rating - Unemployment rate: 5.5% (NZ average 5.0%) — year to March 2025¹

Area & Goals	Key Statistics (Current Baseline)
• Reduce the proportion of households experiencing energy hardship by 25% over 5 years • Increase the proportion of households with consistent access to affordable, nutritious food by 10% within 5 years	• 21% of respondents to the Tairawhiti Wellbeing Survey reported not paying electricity, gas, rates or utility bills on time once or more than once, because of a shortage of money • 30% of Tairawhiti residents occupy dwellings that are considered damp³ • 23.4% of Tairawhiti residents occupy dwellings where visible mould is present⁴ • 35% of respondents to the Tairawhiti Wellbeing Survey reported having 'not enough money' or 'only just enough money' to meet every day needs, for things such as accommodation, food, clothing, and other necessities⁵ • 22.3% of children in Te Manawa Taki live in households where food runs out often or sometimes⁶ • 15.3% of children in Te Manawa Taki live in households that use food banks or food grants due to lack of money for food often or sometimes⁷
Housing Stability • Increase regional housing stock by 30 units per annum. • Increase home ownership by 15% by 2030.	• Over 5,000 additional homes needed by 2050 to meet future growth and demographic change⁸ • As at March 2026, there were 393 families on the MSD housing register (waiting list), 384 of whom are Priority A
Education & Training • 70% of Tairawhiti kura and schools are achieving more than 80% of their students attending more than 90% by year 5 • 20% of Tairawhiti kura and schools are achieving more than 80% of their students attending more than 80%-89% by year 5 • 10% of Tairawhiti kura and schools are achieving more than 80% of their students attending more than 70%-79% by year 5	• As at September 2025, 45.8% of school students were attending more than 90% of classes (NZ average 57.8%)⁹ • 20.7% of Tairawhiti residents 15 years and over have no formal qualification¹⁰ • The NEET rate in Tairawhiti was 13.4% (NZ average 12.9%) in the year to March 2025, down from 14% in the previous 12 months¹¹

³ <https://regions.infometrics.co.nz/tairawhiti/census/indicator/dampness-indicator>

⁴ <https://regions.infometrics.co.nz/tairawhiti/census/indicator/mould-indicator>

⁵ <https://tairawhitidata.nz/wellbeing-data-dashboards/economy/>

⁶ https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2024-25-annual-data-explorer/_w_7ff945c8717849678ddb4beebe86882a/#!/explore-topics

⁷ https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2024-25-annual-data-explorer/_w_7ff945c8717849678ddb4beebe86882a/#!/explore-topics

⁸ https://www.gdc.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/67179/2023-Environmental-Scan.pdf

⁹ <https://quarterly.infometrics.co.nz/tairawhiti/social/school-attendance?compare=new-zealand>

¹⁰ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/detailed-regional-infographics-from-2023-census/our-region-gisborne/>

¹¹ <https://regions.infometrics.co.nz/tairawhiti/employment/neet?compare=new-zealand>

Area & Goals	Key Statistics (Current Baseline)
- By year 5, increase the proportion of people who have a secondary qualification by 10% - By year 3, increase proportion of those 15-24 in employment, education or training by 5%	
Health Status - Improve average life expectancy in our region by 2.5% over the next 3 years - Maori females by 6.5% over the next 3 years - Maori males by 7.5% over the next 3 years - Reduce avoidable hospitalisations by : 33% over the next 3 years for 1 month – 14 year olds 40% among 15 -24 year olds over the next 3 years 33% of ambulatory sensitive hospitalisations amongst 45-64 year olds - Reduce the gap between Māori and non-Māori in the rate of amenable mortality by 15% over the next 5 years - Reduce the rate of hospitalisations for all mental health and substance use-related hospitalisations by 20% over the next 5 years	- Life expectancy for males in Tairāwhiti was 77.9 in 2022-2024 (NZ average 80.1) - Life expectancy for females in Tairāwhiti was 81.5 in 2022-2024 (NZ average 83.1) - Life expectancy for Maori males in Tairāwhiti was 72.9 in 2022-2024 - Life expectancy for Maori females in Tairāwhiti was 76.9 in 2022-2024¹² - Between July 22 and June 23 there were 657 potentially avoidable hospitalisations among 1 mth-14 yr olds, 233 potentially avoidable hospitalisations among 15-24 yr olds and 648 ambulatory sensitive hospitalisations among 45-64 yr olds¹³ - The gap between Māori (average # of 77 per year) and non-Māori (average # of 47 per year) was higher for avoidable deaths (those deaths considered amenable to high-quality healthcare, preventable through public health interventions, or both) compared to all deaths in Tairāwhiti DHB - The leading causes of potentially avoidable deaths (those deaths considered amenable to high-quality healthcare, preventable through public health interventions, or both) for Māori aged 0-74 years in Tairāwhiti DHB were ischaemic heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes, suicide and motor vehicle accidents¹⁴ - Data show significantly higher rates of hospitalisation for all mental disorders (1.5 times) and schizophrenia (2.1 times)
Justice Outcomes - Reduce the number of whanau presenting and being impacted by the Justice System by 10% per annum. - Reduce the number of Tairāwhiti whanau sent to prison by 5% per annum.	- Annually, government directly invests over \$1.3 billion in family violence and sexual violence services and initiatives. - One in two (49%) Māori women experience physical or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime (31% for all women).

¹² Statistics NZ (2025) National and subnational period life tables: 2022-2024

¹³ Curtis, E., Loring, B., Walker, R., Pearse, T., Gilbert-Perenise, S., Gray, G., Akuhata-Huntington, Z., Latham, K., Kiriona, K. (2024). Iwi-Māori Partnership Board Health Profile: Tairāwhiti Toitū Te Ora. Volume Two. Te Aka Whai Ora – Māori Health Authority; Auckland. Pp 35 & 71
[Second-Te-Aorerekura-Action-Plan.pdf](#)

¹⁴ Curtis, E., Loring, B., Walker, R., Pearse, T., Gilbert-Perenise, S., Gray, G., Akuhata-Huntington, Z., Latham, K., Kiriona, K. (2023). Iwi-Māori Partnership Board Health Profile: Tairāwhiti Toitū Te Ora. Volume One. Te Aka Whai Ora – Māori Health Authority; Auckland. P 32

Area & Goals	Key Statistics (Current Baseline)
- Reduce or eliminate system barriers face by whanau by 10% per annum. - Reduce the number of family violence victims by 5% per annum.	- One in ten children and young people aged 12-18 were physically hurt by adults at their home in the past year. 56% of victims of sexual assault are between 15 and 29. - More women reported serious injuries, fear, and physical and mental health impacts following intimate partner violence. 5 74% of people killed by their partners between 2007 and 2021 were women.

Contributing to Government Wellbeing Goals

Community commissioning in Tairawhiti will make a material contribution to the following Government KPIs:

Government KPI	How TCC expects to contribute
Child and youth offending: 15% reduction in children with serious and persistent offending (by 2029)	Root cause level investments in housing, health, education and employment for whanau + commissioning providers who can provide support for all needs whanau have
Violent crime: 20,000 fewer victims of assault, robbery or sexual assault (by 2029)	Root cause level investments in housing, health, education and employment for whanau + commissioning providers who can provide support for all needs whanau have
Jobseeker benefit: 50,000 fewer people on jobseeker benefit	- Specific investment in educational engagement and employment initiatives - See specific in region targets earlier in this section
Student attendance: 80% of students present for 90% of term	- Specific investment in educational engagement - See specific in region targets earlier in this section
Student achievement: 80% of Year 8 students at or above expected curriculum level in reading, writing and maths (by December 2030)	- Specific investment in educational engagement - See specific in region targets earlier in this section
Emergency housing: 75% reduction in households in emergency housing	- Specific investment in housing - See specific in region targets earlier in this section

Economic Returns

Our economic case focuses on the optimal use of public sector investment in regional social wellbeing. Through community commissioning, we can realise value that the current system has consistently failed to deliver.

Our predicted economic return figures are based on growing the value of community commissioned investment over time. This will occur as more government funding becomes in-scope and more investment from philanthropic and other organisations is secured.

The table below sets out the predicted economic returns across interconnected areas on a trajectory that builds from \$40 million commissioned by TCC in year one, building up to total funds of ~\$800 million over 10-years. These calculations and further information are included in a more detailed economic report.

Household Wellbeing returns by year 10	~\$310 million per year by year 10 — based on reducing the cost of deprivation by 50% in the most severely deprived households and 25% in other deprived households
GDP Contribution	~\$800 million increase in regional GDP
Population Retention & Attraction	1% above national trends — leading to ~\$90 million in additional annual payments to employees and ~\$260 million contribution to GDP
Service Delivery Efficiency	At least \$355 million, currently lost to low efficiency, reinvested into frontline services

In addition to the estimated \$1.5 billion in Crown spending, there is around \$600 million of spending by other organisations connected to social and wellbeing impacts. A more detailed economic business case has been developed.

We expect community commissioning to have an impact, directly or indirectly on the wellbeing of all 24,000 residents in Tairawhiti impacted by deprivation.



Part Three: Why Tairawhiti is the Right Place for Community Commissioning

Our Region

Tairawhiti is rich in culture and history. Our families and communities are deeply and intergenerationally connected to our place, our environment, and to each other. Over half our population is Maori, of which local iwi members comprise 70%, and we are a cultural hub of te reo Maori and tikanga Maori excellence.

We have a well-developed economy and are world-leading in aspects of horticulture and engineering. Our economic base is diversifying. While we face challenges related to deprivation, we are a youthful region with strong potential to realise the benefits of early-life investment.

Tairawhiti is an excellent testing ground for this new approach. Our relatively contained geography, coherent regional networks, and the high demand for better services make risk manageable, learning fast, and progress feasible. These factors make us an obvious choice to prototype a genuinely different commissioning and service provision model.

A 2022 NZIER report commissioned by the region found that greater devolution is strongly recommended where bespoke services are needed for complex, longer-term needs; where trust in traditional providers is low; and where long-term, trusted relationships must be formed between providers and clients. All three conditions are prevalent in Tairawhiti.

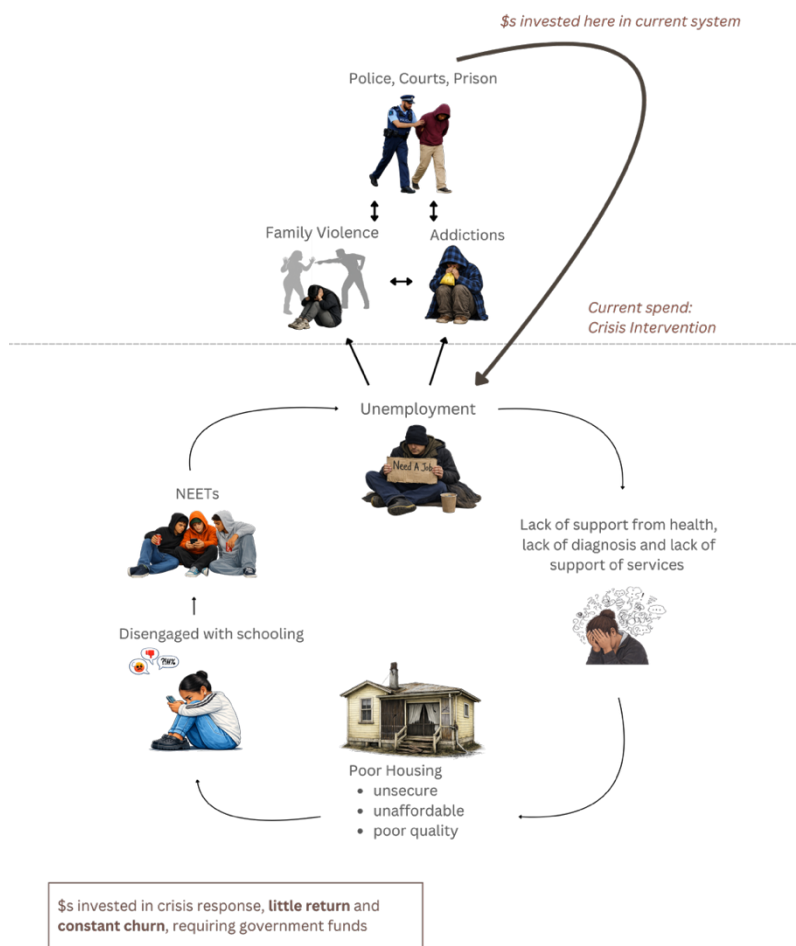
Issues with the Current System

The current system is not working for our region. Our analysis shows estimated Crown investment of around \$1.5 billion per year in the region's social wellbeing – around \$900 million of which is spent “in-region”. Wellbeing outcomes for our community are far below what this level of investment should deliver.

System barriers include: fragmented, siloed service delivery; short-term, output-based contracting that prevents innovation; decisions made in Wellington without the context or proximity to understand Tairawhiti conditions; limited flexibility for providers to respond holistically; and accountability structures that prioritise compliance over outcome

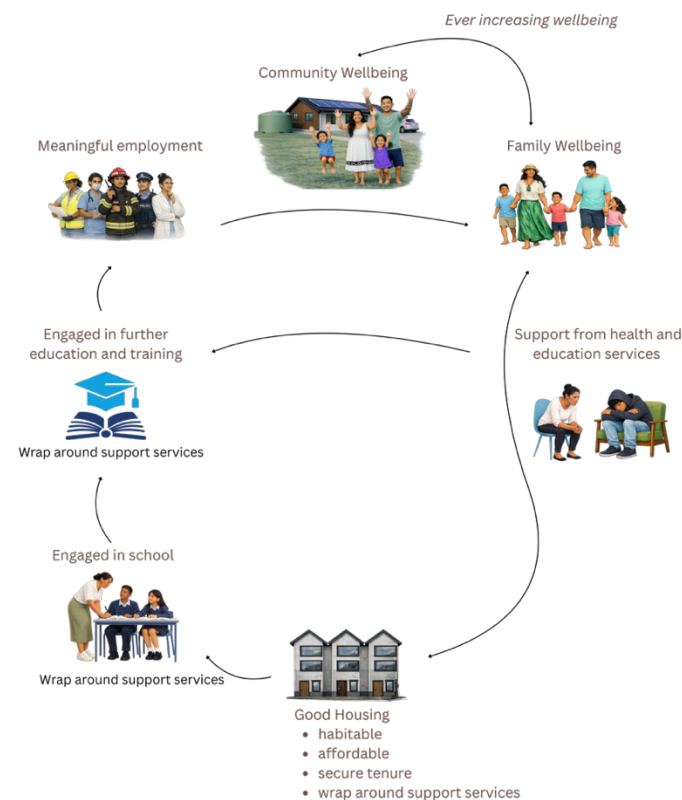
Diagram 4.0 shows how a lack of investment in addressing root causes of good or poor wellbeing leads to more cost in “crisis” level services. Root cause level investments in the building blocks of a good life increases wellbeing and frees up funding for more positive investment. We intend to shift regional investment more and more into a wellbeing cycle model over time.

THE NEGATIVE CRISIS CYCLE



THE WELLBEING CYCLE

First opportunity to change the trajectory



This would be our investment strategy - investing in root causes to stop the upstream impacts of tenuous housing and lack of education attendance.

\$s = greater impact, positive upwards cycle and less dependency on govt, and contribution to GDP

Maturation of a long-term regional strategy

The TCC model may be unique in New Zealand, the result of maturing leadership and relationships over two decades.

In 2016, the Tairawhiti Social Investment Collective (later Manaaki Tairawhiti) submitted a “regional social sector change proposal” to the then Minister for Social Development. In the cover letter, Ta Selwyn Parata (Chair, Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou) wrote:

“Our proposal sets out a clear first step: to establish a single social sector governance board, mandated and focused on a common agenda to help our most vulnerable families. From there, we intend to build the experience, evidence and case to take on greater responsibility for social sector investments in our region. Our leadership is committed to making scarce social sector resources work much better for our most at-risk families”.

The outcome was the Manaaki Tairawhiti Place Based Initiative, now a decade in operation. Manaaki Tairawhiti has worked as a collective of recognised regional leaders, though without a legal structure. A commissioning entity has always been part of the founding vision “...Our vision is that eventually the single governance group becomes the type of social investment commissioning body envisaged by the Productivity Commission.” — Tairawhiti Social Investment Proposal, March 2016.

What We Are Already Achieving — Despite System Barriers

Tairawhiti has consistently shown that when decisions are made closer to communities, better outcomes follow. The examples below illustrate this, and many more can be provided:

Initiative	What We've Achieved
Toitu Tairawhiti Housing Ltd (Their subsidiary Toitu Tairawhiti BuiltSmart Limited is a provider shareholder in TCC)	Iwi-owned and led, delivering housing at a pace that outperforms standard Crown processes. Secured a \$75M government-iwi partnership to build 150 affordable homes, offered under rent and rent-to-buy models creating an affordable pathway to home ownership.
Turanga Health (A provider shareholder in TCC)	Operates a 'go to the people, people at place' model focused on the 20% most disengaged from the health system. Established the Elgin Hub – an in-community health and wellbeing centre – and has run innovative vaccination campaigns reaching harder to reach whanau. Social Return on Investment assessments ¹⁵ of two of Turanga Health’s key programmes have been completed with the following results: • Turanga Health Kaumatua Programme: returned \$8.06 in value for every \$1 invested¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/research-repository/measuring-impact-and-social-value-turanga-healths-services>

¹⁶ <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/gisborne-herald/news/pioneering-gisborne-kaumatua-programme-delivering-eight-times-value-of-investment/QWHPIIX22JEVXIRDP6USK7ZMJU/>

	COVID 19 Vaccination Programme: returned \$4.73 in value for every \$1 spent¹⁷
Manaaki Tairawhiti (Assets and staff transferring to TCC)	An iwi-led collaborative leadership model bringing iwi, providers, central government agencies, local council and community trust together. Produced the Tairawhiti Housing Strategy, the Urungi data platform, detailed system barrier analysis, and the Navigator prototype programme.

COVID-19 and Cyclone Response: Proof of Concept

Our regional responses to COVID-19 and to Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle (2023) and the January 2026 storm events demonstrate definitively what Tairawhiti can achieve when decisions are made in situ, system barriers are relaxed, and the community is empowered to implement approaches it has long advocated for.

These crises, though devastating, provided repeated opportunities to show that iwi and community-led responses, with proximate decision-making, move faster and achieve better outcomes than centralised systems. Community commissioning provides the opportunity to make these approaches permanent, not just crisis-mode exceptions.

¹⁷ <https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/newsroom/vaccination-programme-saves-lives-and-millions>

Part Four: People, Structure and Timeline to Implementation

The Expertise and Experience Behind This Proposal

This proposal has been developed by bringing together those entities that have been working strategically on regionally based decision making:

- Te Aitanga a Mahaki Trust
- Rongowhakaata Iwi Trust
- Tamanuhiri Tutu Poroporo Trust
- Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa
- Tairawhiti Community Voice
- The Violence Free Network
- Manaaki Tairawhiti
- Turanga Health
- Toitu Tairawhiti Housing Ltd
- Trust Tairawhiti
- Gisborne District Council

Our Track Record

Across these organisations, we have a proven track record of effective collaboration, innovation and delivery. Examples of Tairawhiti based commissioning capability include:

Programme	Value	Description
Trust Tairawhiti Grants & Investment (Philanthropic Shareholder and planned MOU partner)	\$170M+ since 1993	Distributing grants and investing in regional wellbeing for over 30 years
Manaaki Tairawhiti Navigator Programme (Staff and assets transferring to TCC)	Approx \$7M over 5 years	14 social service support positions procured through 10 organisations; barrier data collected through Urungi
Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs (GDC is an MOU partner)	\$1M	Training support for NEETs, procured locally
Social Recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle (Various organisations and personnel in different roles across the TCC structure)	\$2.7M	Commissioned social recovery and resilience support from multiple organisations including all 4 iwi
Te Wai Ora Programme (Manaaki Tairawhiti)	\$800K	Community health and resilience in post-Gabrielle environment
Te Whare Whakawaatea (Manaaki Tairawhiti and TROTAK (provider shareholder))	\$1.8M	Commissioned addictions support services

The TCC Working Group was made up of people with expertise in governance, executive leadership, iwi development, social and health service design and delivery, commissioning and contract management, outcomes frameworks, risk management, philanthropic investment, economic development, data and evidence, and Whanau Ora and Place Based Initiatives.

Now that TCC has been established as a stand-alone entity there are several layers of influence and experience with trusted local leaders present at every layer.

Structure of the Model

Collaborative community commissioning in Tairawhiti

The diagram below shows the overall structure of the model:

- Whanau influencing and being served across all parts of the commissioning system
- Community ownership through three shareholder groups
- A skills based Board, supported by a Backbone Office
- Partnerships with local and central government through MOU's
- Leadership and/or influence over all commissioning models, to ensure all commissioning is aligned and collaborative:
 - Independent community commissioning led by TCC
 - Partnered commissioning between TCC and government agencies who retain a commissioning role
 - TCC Influence over the commissioning of Crown operated services where the Crown retains the primary commissioning role.
- Providers being commissioned via the appropriate pathway.

The structure of the entity has been designed to enable community involvement and reflect community mandate.

Diagram 5.0 TCC structure



Community Ownership

The commissioning entity is a charitable company, owned by the community through three shareholding groups:

Shareholder Group	Share	Membership	Establishment shareholders
Iwi Shareholders	45%	Rongowhakaata Iwi Trust, Tamanuhiri Tutu Poroporo Trust, and Te Aitanga a Mahaki Trust (allocation adjustable if Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou joins)	Rongowhakaata Iwi Trust, Te Aitanga a Mahaki Trust
Provider Shareholders	45%	Up to 30 non-government social service providers based and operating in the Tairawhiti region	Gisborne Volunteer Centre, Matapuna Trust, Poho-o-Rawiri Marae Committee Inc, Tairawhiti Community Voice Inc, Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa, Te Whare Hauora o Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Toitu Tairawhiti Builtsmart Limited, Turanga Health, Whaiora SV Services Inc, Whiti Ora Tairawhiti
Philanthropic Shareholders	10%	Up to three philanthropic organisations based in and investing in Tairawhiti	The Sunrise Foundation, Trust Tairawhiti

Becoming a shareholder is a way to be part of shaping the overall direction and governance of this kaupapa. Shareholders do not make service funding or delivery decisions, but they do help shape the strategic direction of TCC and elect the governing board, which in turn influences how social investment in our wellbeing is planned and how services meeting our wellbeing aspirations are purchased across Tairawhiti. Shareholding is intended to be a mechanism for collaborative community involvement and buy-in, rather than a mechanism for power and control.

A further tranche of shareholding has been offered. Applications for shareholding are open until 30 September 2026. We expect around 37 total shareholders with indications of interest from every sector – representing depth and breadth of social wellbeing leadership in our region.

Governance and Operations

The entity is governed by an independent, skills-based Board. An establishment Board of four Directors was elected by establishment shareholders on 7 June 2026. The Board are highly skilled, trusted community leaders who will lead TCC through its establishment phase and Discovery and Design process. All Board members are Tairawhiti residents.

Every Director has been a Chair, Director or Chief Executive of a public sector entity; collectively governing organisations managing \$2b+ in public and philanthropic assets – including governance of Tairawhiti DHB (\$200m+ annual budget), governance and management of Trust Tairawhiti (\$900M in assets and \$20m p/a distributed) governance of Sealords (\$1.3b+)

and governance of Ngati Porou Holding co (\$270m+) and senior public sector positions with Crown reporting and commissioning responsibilities.

Board member	Leadership experience highlights
Kim Ngarimu, Chair <i>Ngati Porou</i>	An experienced public sector executive leader and governor, with a particular emphasis on Maori public policy and health. Highlights: Director Evolution Healthcare Member Waitangi Tribunal, former Chair of Hauora Tairawhiti (DHB), former Deputy Chair Te Pukenga, former Deputy Chair Te Aka Whai Ora Maori Health Authority.
Dr Paul Reynolds, Deputy Chair	An experienced chief executive, board chair, and strategic governor with a strong track record leading complex organisations and major public sector systems. Highlights: Deputy Chair Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, Chair AgResearch Ltd., former Trustee and Chair – Trust Tairawhiti, former Chief Executive Ministry for the Environment, former Chair Waka Kotahi NZTA.
Matanuku Mahuika, Director <i>Ngati Porou, Ngati Raukawa</i>	An experienced lawyer and governor, holding various directorships across iwi, private and public sectors. Highlights: Board member Callaghan Innovation, Board member NZTE, former Chair / Director of Eastland Group, former Chair Sealord Group, former Director Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou and Chair Ngati Porou Holding Company, former Director / Deputy Chair Aotearoa Fisheries Limited.
Gavin Murphy, Director	An experienced CEO, governor, business development executive, project manager and leader of teams. Highlights: Director Hospice Tairawhiti, former CEO - Trust Tairawhiti, former Director Hauora Tairawhiti (DHB), former General Manager Business Development Eastland Group.

A full Board of five Directors will be elected in December 2026. Expressions of interest are officially open for Directors. Establishment Directors would need to be re-elected to retain current positions.

At least four directors must reside in Tairawhiti. The Board develops and oversees strategy, makes commissioning decisions, and provides governance oversight.

The Board is supported by a backbone office providing secretariat services, strategy and policy support (including data analysis and research), workforce development, and engagement support. In the establishment phase, the backbone office will be staffed by Manaaki Tairawhiti employees, retained through the merger of Manaaki Tairawhiti into TCC with additional advisors as required.

Conflicts of Interest

A robust conflicts of interest policy is being implemented. The Board is bound by law to act in the best interests of the company and therefore the community. A person is constitutionally disqualified from the Board if they are a current officer or employee of a shareholder or contractor eligible to receive funding from TCC, or have held such a role in the past three financial years.

TCC has the structure and disciplines of a shareholder company – clear focus on purpose, separation of duties and conflict of interest management, and transparency and openness to the community – while remaining focused on community and whanau social wellbeing.

MOUs and Partnerships

Gisborne District Council has agreed an MOU with TCC committing both organisations to supporting each other's work and sharing strategic data and insights. Trust Tairawhiti, as a shareholder, has agreed to develop an MOU with TCC to align investment strategy and social wellbeing measurement. A proposed MOU with public sector agencies will confirm operational protocols and functional relationships.

Manaaki Tairawhiti Merging into TCC

The Board of Manaaki Tairawhiti has agreed that the next step in its maturity as a Place Based Initiative is to merge into TCC – bringing with it a decade of intellectual property, commissioning experience, the Urungi platform, and a skilled backbone office team.

This was anticipated in Manaaki Tairawhiti's founding vision: '...we expect to expand the scope of the group by taking greater authority over, and responsibility for, services and contracts... Our vision is that eventually the single governance group becomes the type of social investment commissioning body envisaged by the Productivity Commission.' — Tairawhiti Social Investment Proposal, March 2016.

This merger will result in the replacement of the current Manaaki Board with the new TCC Board. The existing governance structure of Manaaki Tairawhiti could not remain in a community commissioning environment as both providers and public sector agencies are represented on the Manaaki Board. Broad community involvement will be maintained via the community shareholding structure.

The Manaaki Tairawhiti staff will provide backbone office support to the establishment Board. The Manaaki Tairawhiti staff team bring strong understanding of regional social wellbeing goals; budget and contract management capability; system design and barrier analysis; measurement system and data system design; workforce development; organisational management; and national knowledge-sharing through published reports and conferences.

Manaaki Tairawhiti also brings its intellectual property including: a whanau voice measurement framework; the Urungi database; robust analysis of what works and what does not; and a suite of presentations and communications materials.

How Quickly Can We Begin Commissioning?

While the SIA has indicated up to a year of funded design before commissioning begins, TCC has clarity on what it wants to achieve through commissioning and confidence in the commissioning systems already established. The region is already experienced in investing in social wellbeing, and the merger of Manaaki Tairawhiti means the backbone office, commissioning competency, and data infrastructure are immediately available. Our proposal to the SIA suggests a Discovery and Design phase of eight months.

The expected product of the Discovery and Design phase with SIA is a detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) which will be evaluated by a suitably qualified and experienced Evaluation Panel who will make recommendations. The final decision on whether to proceed will be made at the Ministerial level.

If successful, key tasks we intend to complete during the Discovery and Design phase include:

- Comprehensive analysis of whanau, hapu and community needs, including through existing data and insights and direct engagement
- Work with communities to support their completion of localised and regional wellbeing plans – including specific work with underserved communities (geographical and interest-based)
- Understanding government systems, requirements and parameters for community commissioning
- Finalise policies, procedures and supporting materials for commissioning
- Establish funding and co-commissioning partnerships
- Develop evaluation and performance management frameworks
- Complete organisational design
- Develop and publish investment strategy
- Issue a second tranche of shares
- Complete election process for permanent Board
- Complete workforce analysis and develop long-term capability strategy
- Complete regional data plan and strategy (including access and privacy mechanisms and protocols)
- Develop near-real-time data access points for stakeholders and service users including whanau
- Formalise partnership agreements to scale Urungi.

TCC has signalled an intention to SIA to discuss protections for intellectual property developed through the Discovery and Design phase.

Proposed Commissioning Rollout

The business case prepared alongside the EOI sets out the following pathway

Tranche 1, 2 years: \$40m year one, \$52m year two (2027–2028) for priority interventions in the first two years.

Tranche 2, 5 years: An average of \$149m growing to \$164m per annum (2029–2033).

Completed	Planned	Provisional
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Implementation Plan

Tairawhiti Community Commissioning	Q4 25	Q1 26	Q2 26	Q3 26 Planned actions take place irrespective of success of EOI	Q4 26 Provisional: If EOI successful	Q1 27	Q2 27	Q3 27
Engagement with government	Meeting with SIA and Prime Minister	Touch base with PM at Iwi Chairs Forum Update local MP	Engagement with SIA and agencies	<i>Codesign with SIA</i>	<i>Codesign with SIA</i>	<i>Codesign with SIA</i>	<i>Codesign with SIA</i>	<i>Partnership SIA</i>
Theory of Change/Strategic Plan	Draft through Working Party	Draft through regional leaders	Final submitted as part of EOI EOI forms basis of the strategic plan		<i>Funded design</i>	<i>Funded design</i>	<i>Funded design</i>	<i>Commissioning begins</i>
Community engagement	Community engagement round 1	Community engagement round 2	Community engagement round 3	Community engagement round 4		Community engagement ongoing		
Community mandate	Agreement in principle	Agreement on detail	Key stakeholders become Shareholders or sign MOU (GDC)	Initial General Meeting of the TCC Shareholder Board elections Second Share tranche offered	Second Share tranche allocated			
Legal entity established and operational	Draft documents adjusted based on feedback	Legal entity established	Establishment Board elected	Manaaki Tairawhiti merger into TCC and Backbone office Established Strategic Plan adopted	Permanent Board elected Regular Board meetings	Regular Board meetings	Regular Board meetings	<i>Commissioning begins</i>

Items in italics are provisional on the success of the EOI. All Q3 '26 actions take place irrespective of the EOI outcome

Conclusion

After years of advocating for devolved social service commissioning and social investment decision-making, locally designed and led solutions, evidence gathering from multiple sources, building data, outcomes, measurement and performance management platforms, and demonstrating our ability to lead in times of crisis, Tairāwhiti is ready to establish a commissioning entity and system. We believe that a Tairāwhiti Commissioning Entity will genuinely improve the lives of our families and communities.

This proposal sets out a bold but considered pathway for shifting decision-making closer to whānau and communities, strengthening the capability of providers, and investing in wellbeing and harm prevention rather than perpetuating cycles of crisis. It reflects both the aspirations of our people and the collective expertise built across iwi, community organisations, local government, philanthropy and providers.

Our proposal is not just about taking a timely opportunity presented by government, it is the logical next step along the pathway we committed to and are currently on. We have proven our ability to step up and help ourselves, and when provided with sufficient support and the authority to act, can move at pace, address immediate priorities and build the pathways and infrastructure for greater resilience and improved productivity.

Our region has long delivered effective, collaborative and innovative responses. We have seen this through regional housing solutions, our rapid and coordinated disaster recoveries, and community-led health and social initiatives. These experiences show that the foundations for community commissioning are not just present, they are strong.

By partnering with us, the government, and others, have the opportunity to unlock significant wellbeing and economic gains, use existing investment more effectively, and work with us to build a system that continuously learns and adapts. Most importantly, it will support whānau to thrive in ways that matter to them, while building a stronger platform for future generations. We invite you to walk alongside Tairāwhiti in shaping a model that can achieve real, lasting change for our region — and, in time, offer a blueprint for Aotearoa.

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Tairawhiti Community Commissioning

Key dates

14 May 2026

25 – 29 May 2026

9 June 2026 – 12.00 pm

10 June 2026

12 June 2026 – 12.00 pm

June/July 2026

July/August 2026

August/September 2026

SIA EOI opens

Round 3 engagement hui

Community feedback closes

EOI finalised

SIA close-off

SIA shortlisting proposals

Wananga with shortlisted

applicants expected

Decisions from SIA expected

Feedback and Enquiries

- admin@manaakitairawhiti.nz
- <https://mt.org.nz>