

# *Social Sector Overview*

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## *Social Sector Overview Statement*

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Vote Education in this volume is part of the Social Sector, which also includes Vote Health (in volume 6), Vote Corrections, Vote Courts, Vote Justice and Vote Police (all in volume 7), Vote Māori Development and Vote Pacific Peoples (both in volume 8) and Vote Building and Housing, Vote Social Development, Vote Social Housing and Vote Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki (all in volume 10). In addition, appropriations to be used by the Social Investment Agency are in Vote State Services (in volume 5).

### Government Priorities for the Social Sector

Agencies within the social sector deal with some of the most complex issues facing New Zealand today. For very vulnerable New Zealanders the solutions do not sit within the ambit of a single agency and so agencies have to take person and family/whānau-centred ways of working to improve outcomes. The sector collaborates and undertakes joint activity at local, regional and national levels, when necessary to achieve Government Priorities such as through the focus on investing in vulnerable children through the establishment of a new government agency, and the Better Public Services Results Programme. Some example areas requiring cross-agency collaboration include Welfare Dependence, Health Outcomes for Children, Educational Attainment and Social Housing.

The Government's intent to implement social investment approaches across the social sector provides an opportunity for agencies to sharpen their focus on lifting outcomes for all New Zealanders, but particularly for the most vulnerable. Social investment promotes a client-centred approach so the social sector can help improve the lives of vulnerable New Zealanders and increase the effectiveness of government spending.

Social investment at its most simple is about investing earlier, and more effectively, in the lives of those who may otherwise be on track to experience poor outcomes so they achieve better in the longer-term and at a lower total cost. This will be achieved through better use of data and evidence, more rigorous programme evaluation and both a whole-of-life and whole-of-system understanding of impact, centred around people, not agencies, and whole of life service decision-making and delivery systems.

The Government has established a new portfolio with a Minister Responsible for Social Investment to further advance social investment. As well as better understanding and addressing need within portfolios, social investment approaches will increase understanding of the whole-of-social-system response required to achieve desired outcomes for particular groups of people over their lifetime.

To support the Minister and the sector, a Social Investment Board and Social Investment Agency are being established on 1 July 2017.

### How we will Deliver on Government Priorities

Social Sector agencies will continue to develop social investment approaches in their sectors. Agencies are furthering their understanding of the application of investment approaches. There are now investment approaches to welfare, social housing and justice. The Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki, launched on 1 April 2017, is taking an investment approach to vulnerable children and is the first agency established from day one using a social investment approach.

The Social Investment Board will drive action to improve outcomes for vulnerable population. It will:

- advise on the strategic direction, priorities and joint results for the social sector in areas where better results cannot be achieved without a collective approach
- advise on best investments for achieving joint results, including advice on optimal resource allocations and any reprioritisation across time, and how investments are performing
- oversee the implementation of any investment plans agreed by the government, working with social sector agencies to deliver demonstrable results.

Social sector agencies are continuing to trial new ways of working. A number of frontline initiatives are adopting social investment principles, for example Whānau Ora, the Family Violence Integrated Safety Response and Place-Based Initiatives. Whānau Ora supports whānau to achieve their aspirations by placing whānau at the centre of planning and decision-making and tailoring solutions relevant to their unique circumstances. The Integrated Safety Response tests an improved multi-agency approach to risk assessment and safety planning for families following a Police family violence incident or high risk prison release. The Place-Based Initiatives aim to improve outcomes for at-risk young people and their families by giving local social sector leaders the data, flexibility and support to collectively tailor responses to what works in their specific communities.

Agencies will be assisted by the social investment architecture developed by the Social Investment Agency. This will include tools, templates, methodologies and analysis to drive effective practice across the social sector. The Social Investment Agency will also provide whole of life and whole of system advice to Ministers, monitor capability across the sector and monitor the impact of some investments and the social investment approach.

## How we will Measure Performance

Measurement is inherent in social investment approaches. It includes:

- *Measurement and evaluation* to ensure service effectiveness
- *Feedback loops* to inform decision makers
- *Commissioning* of services to achieve desired outcomes
- *Social licence* to gain New Zealanders' support for the sharing and use of data
- *Governance* across the social investment system so we can better understand the impact we are having.

There is an expectation that social sector agencies will use social investment approaches to enhance their business as usual operations. Greater use of data and evidence and a focus on tracking outcomes will continue to improve agencies' understanding of their customers and service effectiveness, and enable them to identify opportunities across the system to reduce future demand pressures.

The Social Investment Board will formalise the collective accountability of chief executives for social investment advice and the delivery of results. The Board will have a role in monitoring the performance of investments.