PUBLIC SECTOR

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A FRAMEWORK FOR WELLBEING

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By IPANZ President Dr Jo Cribb

As the year ends, I am sure many of you are eyeing up a well-deserved break and chance to step aside from what has been a busy, dynamic year. Often in the hurly-burly of day-to-day life, we do not have much time for considered reflection. It is something we often leave for the summer period. However, for many of us, considered and deep thinking was needed – and needed quickly – in order to respond to the State Sector Review discussion paper.

In the six-week period available, the IPANZ board met and discussed and sought feedback from members (through *ThinkTank* software provided by Victoria University of Wellington). We pulled together a submission, which is available on our website and is summarised in this edition.

We tackled some fundamental questions (usually the stuff of deep, summer-holiday reflection), such as what role does and can legislation play in behaviour change? Given the dynamic nature of our context and the slow nature of legislative change, how can legislation not constrain us in a few years' time?

In essence, we support the review of the 30-year-old State Sector Act. However, we ask some tough questions around the core ideas in the proposals. We want any new legislation to be *enabling*. For example, while the proposal includes a range of new organisational forms, we see these as part of the public management toolkit, and new tools will need to be added. So we call for the legislation to be permissive in terms of structure.

We want any new legislation to be *sensible*. If you look around the world, few complex systems have chosen leadership by a single person. With a few notable exceptions, no single person is seen as wise or knowledgeable enough. That is why we have governance boards and cabinets and checks and balances. IPANZ applies this thinking to the proposal around the head of the public service and calls for a commission of three to be the lead.

We want any new legislation to be *inclusive*. To be credible, the New Zealand public service needs to reflect the people it serves. We do not want biases built into any new legislation. For example, how merit is defined and, therefore, what is valued (or not valued) in leaders directly impacts on who is selected to lead.

Given there was such a short timeframe for discussion and submissions, we have not commented on many of the proposals. We urge those leading the process to use it as an opportunity to showcase the important role the public service plays in our country and engage a wider range of us in the co-construction of the future pillars of the public service. I encourage you in any quiet time you have over the next few months to consider what you think about the public service and where it should head and then be ready to (hopefully) participate in widespread discussions next year.

Jo Cribb
President

Meri Kirihimete me te Hape Nū Ia

New Policy and Communications Opportunities

We are well into 2018 and the market isn't slowing down! There is a strong demand for policy and communications professionals across a number of sectors in response to new government initiatives being rolled out. As the year has progressed there have been a number of exciting and diverse projects to be a part of and this will only continue over the months to come.

At this time of the year demand is high for:
- Senior Policy Advisors with experience in the Social Sector
- Research Analysts with stakeholder engagement skills
- Mid to senior level communications professionals with both an internal and external focus
- Policy professionals who are interested in working in the commercial sector

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IPANZ supports State Services Act review

IPANZ supports the State Services Act review and the proposed new Act in its submission to the State Sector Review discussion paper.

"The State Sector Act 1988 changed substantially how the public service operated. Now, 30 years on, citizens' expectations, technology, and the nature of the problems and issues with which public servants have to deal have again changed significantly. It is appropriate to take another look at the way in which the public service operates."

However, the submission notes that not all the issues identified in the discussion paper are susceptible to a "fix" through legislation. Current innovative collaborative practices have been possible within the current laws.

"IPANZ strongly urges that it [the new Act] be drafted with a view to using permissive, rather than mandatory, language wherever possible. An unknown future requires flexibility."

The submission notes that MPs have a partnership relationship with the public service, and this should be reflected in the values statement. It suggests: "In its working relationship with the public sector, Government and Ministers will create an environment in which free and frank and comprehensive advice is respected."

Further, "merit selection" needed to be defined in today's context to reflect the wide range of skills required, for example, cultural competence and language skills, especially to increase diversity and Māori public sector leadership.

The discussion paper proposed some flexible organisational options towards achieving a "joined-up" public service, such as Public Service Executive Boards and joint ventures.

IPANZ supports ways to encourage cross-agency exchanges but said that "behaviour change and attitude is a much more central ingredient than legislative change". It doesn't support the proposed Public Service Executive Boards, nor legislating for public service joint ventures.

New approaches and different organisational arrangements will be required to tackle today's "wicked problems". IPANZ supports the proposal to require chief executives to exercise collective responsibility and accountability in the collective interests of the public sector.

"Part of a new approach to collaboration might lie in potential changes to the Public Finance Act, allowing greater multi-agency accountability for particular appropriations. A number of chief executives might be held collectively responsible for a joint appropriation covering a collaborative inter-agency activity."

On the question of the proposed appointment of Public Service Commissioner(s), IPANZ supports the Chairperson model, that is, Chair, Deputy Chair, and one or two other Commissioners.

"No single person has a monopoly of knowledge or wisdom, and decision making will benefit from being drawn from a diversity of views, experience, social and other backgrounds."

The IPANZ submission was tested with a cross-section of members using the decision support software *ThinkTank* via Victoria University of Wellington. About 100 members also attended a panel discussion and raised important questions about values and behaviours for the public sector, whether the Act would go far enough to recognise Māori partnership and values, and how objective the "appointment on merit" principle could be.

A State Sector Bill is likely to be introduced in the middle of next year.

The full submission is available at: www.ipanz.org.nz

GUEST EDITORIAL

Andrew Bridgman

ANDREW BRIDGMAN is finishing after more than seven years as the Secretary for Justice and Chief Executive of the Ministry of Justice. Andrew looks at some of the lessons that he will take with him.

Applying public policy thinking to justice

Our justice system is steeped in history, with hierarchy, rules, precedents, and procedures. It is a complex business. Around two-thirds of the Ministry of Justice's 3,800 staff work in the courts. It is a big system.

It is very easy to think of and see the system as an end in itself – but it's not. Over the last seven and a half years, a fascinating part of my role as Secretary for Justice has been applying a public policy lens to the system.

CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

Public Sector journal is always happy to receive contributions from readers.

If you're working on an interesting project in the public sector or have something relevant to say about a particular issue, think about sending us a short article on the subject.

Contact the editor Simon Minto at simon.g.minto@gmail.com

There are three key lessons that I learned about how public policy thinking can improve the courts system:

1. System thinking is critical
2. A clear purpose is essential
3. We need to have goals.

System thinking

To understand how something works, we need to understand the interdependencies between each part of the system. System thinking is relevant in the court system for three main reasons:

Firstly, there are many participants who all have different roles, skills, disciplines, and drivers. We need to understand how those drivers and behaviours impact on the effectiveness of the courts. The behaviour of judges, counsel, Crown solicitors, police prosecutors, court staff, victim advisers, security officers, and probation officers collectively and individually impact on the effectiveness of the courts.

Secondly, independence is a fundamental theme of the court system. While judicial independence is widely recognised, independence is present throughout the system. Each participant is required to behave without undue influence from the others. Lawyers have an overriding duty to the court, but also owe a series of duties to their clients. Registrars perform their duties independent of the Executive or lawyers. The Crown solicitors prosecutorial decisions are made independent of the Executive or public opinion. This flows on to all others in the system.

Despite our independence, we are completely dependent on each other to make the system work and to succeed in our own roles. Judges are dependent on court staff, court staff are dependent on lawyers, lawyers are dependent on their clients, and clients are dependent on all of us. Ultimately, interdependencies affect all of us.

How well the court system works, or doesn't, is a reflection on everyone in the system. While we are independent, the effectiveness of the system is affected by how well we work together.

Thirdly, there is no single owner of the court system. The fact that the system can often be slow is a fact that no single person or entity is responsible for. We need to hold each other to account because the actions of one of us reflects on the whole system. And more importantly, by not looking across the system and holding each other to account, we miss the opportunity to collectively analyse the things that slow it down, and therefore, we miss opportunities to improve it.

Clear purpose

The court system provides a mechanism for the public to resolve cases and settle disputes according to law. It is a system for the people of New Zealand. Ensuring the system is people focused is critically important because the system must be seen by the public as accessible, understandable, fair, and efficient.

With that in mind, we must continually think about the public's needs and whether the system meets those needs. For many of the people who come into the court system, they find it foreign, antiquated, inaccessible, and expensive. While the delivery methods of justice change, and should change, the principles of justice shouldn't. But unless the delivery of justice changes with the times, the court system risks losing its relevance as a public institution and people start to question its usefulness.

Goals

Goals unify us. Having goals means we are agreeing on where we believe we can make improvements. They demonstrate that we are committed to making things better for the people the system exists for. And they show that we are prepared to be held to account for performance.

In recent years, we have had a focus on timeliness in the court system – justice delayed is justice denied. The District Court deals with 95 percent of criminal cases within 12 months. That is an efficient operation, but we should still be striving for better. Ninety-five percent still means just over five and a half thousand defendants, witnesses, family, and supporters, and all of the others involved in a case, are waiting for more than a year to have their cases resolved.

There are multiple reasons for this, but I believe that while we have our independent roles within this system, we could be doing more to work on our interdependencies to ensure the system is even more efficient for the wellbeing of the people the system is here to serve.

I am a firm believer that a public policy overlay will result in a better court system, and as the system exists to help the public, it is appropriate to look at the system with that perspective.

READER CONTRIBUTION

WHERE NEXT FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

David Hammond

Major infrastructure projects have a big impact on communities. Engaging with those communities is critical to the success of those projects, but local authorities and infrastructure providers often find this a fraught process. DAVID HAMMOND from Business Lab explores some recent developments and suggests a way forward.

Engaging with the community on infrastructure projects is a tricky business. And it's getting more tricky because the goalposts of community expectations continue to move. What used to be acceptable to communities is no longer guaranteed to be good enough. This rapid change in expectations is occurring even within the timespan of individual projects. This change was articulated to me in 2017 when a disgruntled citizen said, "They think they are consulting with us. It's not consultation; it's 'insultation'."

This change can be illustrated through an infrastructure project that seemed to

do everything right. In June 2017, Nelson City Council's Infrastructure Committee considered a proposal for a cycleway in Tahunanui. The proposal was brought after years of work, which included extensive community consultation.

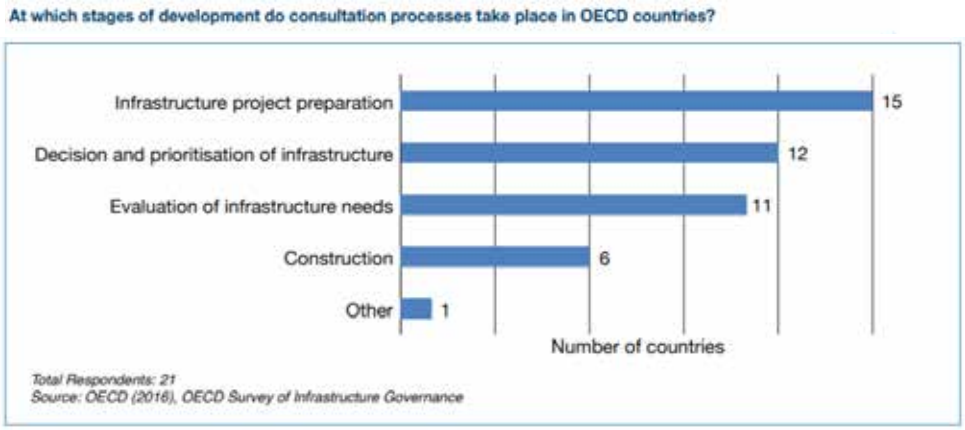
"They think they are consulting with us. It's not consultation; it's 'insultation'."

To the surprise of nearly everyone, particularly the council members and the staff, the well-consulted, recommended route was rejected by the very community that proposed it. Tahunanui neighbourhood residents filled the public gallery to reinforce their opposition, yet the council followed good consultation practice and had taken extensive advice. The consultation had been substantively undertaken several years earlier, during the project preparation phase, but this gap between preparation and final approval proved a lifetime in terms of the project delivery outcome.

Nelson City's Infrastructure Committee concluded, "After hearing from the community in the public forum and much discussion around the table, we have decided not to pursue the previous recommended route at this time." The project was referred back for a redesign of the engagement process.

The timing of engagement

There is a mutual sense of exasperation by both communities and the organisations managing infrastructure projects – and this is not a uniquely New Zealand challenge, but an international one. An insightful report on this was provided by the *OECD Framework for Governance of Infrastructure* in 2016, which concluded:



> "Infrastructure impacts communities – without well managed consultation, good projects may falter. Consultations in democratic countries should take into account the role of elected representatives and executives to take action on behalf of the public good in a timely fashion."
>
> *OECD Framework for Governance of Infrastructure (2016), (page 7)*

The report observes that, across the OECD, transport projects are driving most infrastructure planning, and in most projects, consultation is done in the early stages and then tails off – as the above figure illustrates.

The report concludes that consultation processes need to be proportionate to the size of the project and must take account of the overall public interest and the views of the relevant stakeholders. The process should be "broad-based, inspire dialogue and draw on public access to information and users' needs". Surely there would be unanimous agreement to these principles in New Zealand, yet there remains a growing mismatch between public expectation of engagement and the practice by infrastructure providers.

Yet there remains a growing mismatch between public expectation of engagement and the practice by infrastructure providers.

Getting the community interested

In July 2018, the inaugural Australian National Community Engagement Infrastructure Conference (NCEIC 2018) estimated that there were infrastructure projects valued at A$140 billion on the verge of approval in Australia. The NCEIC 2018 was convened to address the challenge that public demand for engagement poses to these projects. In the past decade, an estimated $20 billion of investment has been mothballed or significantly delayed due, in part, to a lack of community and stakeholder engagement. Further, 68 percent of infrastructure investors are reportedly concerned about the socio-political risks, and research suggests that 45 percent of citizens believe that developers are socially irresponsible.

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Reflecting on the conference message, John Fitzgerald, past head of Infrastructure Australia, responded, "We have to sell the vision for and benefits of our developments better. This along with embracing transparency and organisational/public buy-in to an engagement approach are the most important improvements we can make."

Local Government New Zealand recently initiated an Excellence Programme to raise the performance of councils across many areas, including infrastructure development. Programme Assessor, and former Queenstown-Lakes District Council Chief Executive, Adam Feeley, spoke to the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia NZ conference this year about local government consultation. While overall engagement was strong, he noted a reluctance by councils to have difficult conversations about the viability and affordability of levels of service. Using the OECD report's phraseology, local government has not been effective in "inspiring dialogue". Feeley said that the importance of good infrastructure to everyday life has not been well communicated and this conversation gap is a "missed opportunity".

Returning to Tahunanui's proposed cycleway, in August 2017, Nelson City reshaped the cycleway process to one of community co-design, stating, "Based on the clear message from the previous public submissions the new approach places much stronger emphasis on including key stakeholders and the community in developing the final outcome of a preferred route for the cycleway."

The importance of good infrastructure to everyday life has not been well communicated and this conversation gap is a "missed opportunity".

Chris Allen of Bicycle Nelson Bays spoke to the *Nelson Mail* about his appreciation for the co-design model, saying, "To stand back at the last minute and say, 'actually, I think we could do this better', is a very good outcome for everyone."

A way forward

So where next for public engagement? The guidance from NCEIC 2018 provided principles broadly reflecting the OECD report, which can be summarised as:

- Communicate the vision for the project in a more engaging way
- Cover all the bases – don't leave anyone out and treat everyone equally
- Have complete transparency throughout the life of the project
- Have an engagement strategy that traverses the life of the project
- Implement an engagement philosophy integrated throughout an organisation's culture
- Be genuine about the process of engagement and elevate the importance of engagement to the same level as that of health and safety
- Respect the role of elected members
- Be agile and reflective of the results of engagement throughout the life of the project.

Good practice examples of infrastructure engagement are now emerging. An example is Melbourne's $6.7 billion West Gate Tunnel project to unclog traffic through Melbourne's centre and to the city's port. Involving new freeways, tunnels, and elevated highways, the project is similar to the raft of Auckland City transport projects but is integrated under one entity and procurement framework.

The West Gate Tunnel's engagement strategy is underpinned by transparency and clarity of information. It includes a mix of newsletters and online media channels, public information sessions, and an ongoing relationship with Community Liaison Groups, who give feedback throughout the project. Complementing this engagement, the project is underpinned by a Social Procurement Framework, which is winning the hearts and minds of Melbournians.

Sponsored by the Victorian government in 2018, the Social Procurement Framework creates jobs for those facing barriers to employment, including Aboriginal people, long-term job seekers, at-risk women, victims and survivors of family violence, people with disabilities, and youth. The framework also increases access for social enterprises wanting to supply goods and services and offers investors the opportunity to incorporate social and environmental impacts into their decision making. In the West Gate Tunnel project, 6,000 new jobs are anticipated, including 500 apprentices and up to 150 jobs for former auto workers.

New methods for engagement

The past decade has also seen an explosion of new digital engagement and information platforms. A leading Australian initiative called Bang the Table illustrates this. The company is a specialist provider of online stakeholder engagement services to government and public sector and private enterprise clients. It includes a stakeholder engagement platform and participatory budgeting software. In New Zealand, it is being used to engage communities and stakeholders through a suite of interactive information, including project timeframes and current progress. It's being used by Wellington City, Rotorua Lakes, Otago District, and Regenerate Christchurch. In October 2018, the company's website claims that 442,601 citizens have been engaged in the past 30 days.

The past decade has also seen an explosion of new digital engagement and information platforms.

The NCEIC 2018 conference noted that the engagement culture of organisations should be raised to the level that health and safety currently inhabits. The insight from the conference is that organisations cannot achieve the transparency, genuineness, and consistency of engagement unless it becomes part of the DNA of business values and practice. A senior manager of a council recently confirmed this to me saying, "We can change to being more partner-orientated in what we do, but we just don't have those skills in the teams. So if we're going to do this consistently, we have to make a big change right across council."

The insight from the conference is that organisations cannot achieve the transparency, genuineness, and consistency of engagement unless it becomes part of the DNA of business values and practice.

In conclusion, it is worth noting the subtle shift of language in recent years from "consultation" to "engagement". The meaning of "engage" is actually derived from French, meaning "to pledge". Reconnecting with communities in 2018 is not just a task to be given to the communications staff or put into some "consultation" exercise. Successful engagement needs to be a pledge from the entire organisation, including elected members, to enter into a good-faith journey with communities and partners, including iwi, which has both "off-ramps" and "on-ramps" right throughout the decision-making process and project-construction lifecycle. The goalposts of community expectation in 2018 have permanently shifted and so must the engagement competence of our infrastructure providers.

Find out more

If you'd like to contact David about any of these issues, send him an email at Business Lab: david@businesslab.co.nz

A FRAMEWORK FOR WELLBEING

As we look towards New Zealand's first "Wellbeing Budget" in 2019, CARL BILLINGTON takes a closer look at what we mean by wellbeing and how we might measure it.

The economics of wellbeing

Traditionally, wellbeing has always been the focus, if not always the outcome, of economics. The current kōrero that is developing around wellbeing, economics, and public policy represents a return to this original understanding.

Paul Dalziel, Professor of Economics at Lincoln University, explains, "We have tended to separate social policy from economic policy in the belief that the best contribution economic policy can make to wellbeing is to increase financial growth.

Paul Dalziel

"I think one of the underlying drivers for the current movement towards wellbeing economics is a realisation that *how* we grow is just as important as *how much* we grow.

"The dialogue around climate change has highlighted the possibility that we could grow ourselves out of existence – that's a pretty sharp incentive to refocus our thinking more broadly on how the market economy contributes to wellbeing."

Understanding the "four capitals"

While there are a number of frameworks and approaches to wellbeing, they tend to be variations on the four capitals approach.

The four capitals are:

- **Natural capital** – covers all aspects of the natural environment needed to support life and human activity
- **Human capital** – the skills, knowledge, and physical and mental health that enable people to participate fully in work, study, and recreation and in society generally
- **Social capital** – the norms and values that underpin society: such as trust, law, cultural identity, Crown–Māori relationship, and connections between people and communities
- **Financial/physical capital** – the things that make up the physical and financial assets we use to support our income and material living conditions.

Following this same approach, Treasury's Living Standards Framework was developed to support more cohesive public policy. It draws on the OECD "How's Life" analysis of current wellbeing and the four capitals as a way of organising indicators of sustainable wellbeing.

Each of the four capitals offers a different view of the resources people draw on to create wellbeing. Together they provide the basis for the Living Standards Framework, alongside the set of indicators that are being developed in support of the 2019 Wellbeing Budget.

As Dalziel explains, "Economists have a good understanding of how to maintain and increase physical capital. Now those principles need to be applied to the full range of capitals. We derive ecosystem services from our natural capital – but how do we reinvest in maintaining and enhancing the quality of our natural capital so it can continue to provide those services in the future?

> **How *we grow is just as important as* how much *we grow.***

"We draw heavily on our social capital every day, but do we know how to reinvest to make sure social capital continues to grow and become more inclusive of new groups in our population? Ensuring those in rural districts have access to global knowledge capital through investment in ultra-fast broadband is also part of this."

The four capitals help highlight a range of questions regarding access, inclusion, and future investment that can inform public policy and focus the interventions we look to put in place.

"We need to recognise that people are actors in their own wellbeing as individuals, as families, as households, and as market participants. Consequently, the role of government is not handing out wellbeing as if it were porridge from a cauldron. Government's role is about enhancing the efforts already being made by people for their own wellbeing.

"In creating their wellbeing, people draw on services provided by long-term capital assets that are broader than just the things we make and trade. We need to recognise our human, social, and natural capital alongside traditional physical or economic capital. You could also consider cultural, knowledge, and diplomatic capital, but the four capitals give us a good place to start."

> ***"We need to recognise that people are actors in their own wellbeing as individuals, as families, as households, and as market participants."***

The privilege of access

Carla Houkamau, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Māori and Pacific Development at the University of Auckland Business School, picks up on the theme of access, highlighting it as a class

issue and one of the biggest obstacles we need to overcome to achieve widespread wellbeing for New Zealanders.

Carla Houkamau

"A major challenge Māori have in achieving equity in wellbeing is a socio-economic problem. The barriers in access are actually socio-economic – in short, what we have is a class issue."

Houkamau points to data recently released that found only 6 percent of approximately 16,000 students accepted into university courses in law, medicine, and engineering come from our more disadvantaged homes, while over 50 percent of students come from our top three income brackets.

The same research found that while 50 percent of students from high-decile schools go on to university, only 17 percent from low-decile schools do.

"The barriers in access are actually socio-economic – in short, what we have is a class issue."

"Market forces have very real flow-on effects that impact directly on wellbeing," Houkamau observes.

"We've all seen it happening: those with the financial means gravitate to areas with higher priced homes and well-funded and resourced schools. This movement increases housing prices in those areas, ensuring only others with equivalent financial means can follow, and those schools gain more resources and attract more qualified and experienced teachers, leaving schools in lower decile communities under-resourced and struggling to attract staff.

"Homogenising Māori, or any group of people, 'others' them and detracts from class issues."

"While efforts have been put into cultural responsiveness to Māori, this is not going to cure inequality in educational outcomes. There are kids from high-income Māori families who have access to te reo Māori, are very confident in Māori culture, and get the benefits of attending high decile schools. Their experience with their teachers and school will be different from those whose families are living in poverty – who have access to culture but whose parents are seriously struggling financially. Ethnic identity does not make everyone exactly the same.

"Even when it comes to the current conversation about wellbeing, people tend to ask what a Māori perspective on wellbeing looks like. Although it's typically well-intentioned, it highlights the way we tend to homogenise Māori as if they're all the same.

"Homogenising Māori, or any group of people, 'others' them and detracts from class issues. The education system is not exempt. The New Zealand School Trustees Association released a report earlier this year *Education matters to me: Key insights,* which showed that Māori children and young people experience racism at school and are treated unequally because of their culture. The New Zealand Educational Institute recently published research that shows that Māori and Pasifika principals are targets of racism too. It's simply appalling.

"From a wellbeing standpoint, Māori need the same as anyone else: access to good work, safe and warm accommodation, positive relationships with family and friends, and to be treated with respect without being stereotyped. These needs are fairly universal, and the main determinant of access to good quality education is family income," Houkamau adds.

"If we ask what Māori success as Māori looks like, there isn't just one answer. Māori cultural values and practices do influence decision making and perceptions of success and wellbeing for Māori but, at the same time, they are not homogenous with many displaying economic attitudes and aspirations quite different from those attributed to traditional Māori ways of being," Houkamau adds.

Now that we know what some of the indicators and issues are, the next step is finding ways to measure our progress.

Measuring wellbeing

Conal Smith, Principal of Kōtātā Insight, has been working alongside Treasury and others on exactly this issue. Smith observes that although there is a large and robust pool of scientific literature in the field of wellbeing, integrating this into the public policy conversation is a newer development.

"It might be something a number of civil servants are wrestling with for the first time, but there is a lot of literature in the scientific community and a strong consensus regarding what we mean by wellbeing and how it can be measured.

Conal Smith

"People tend to talk about wellbeing either in terms of the capability of people to live the kind of lives they value or in terms of a positive subjective evaluation of your life. One perspective focuses on capability, the other fulfilment," Smith explains.

"There is a lot of literature in the scientific community and a strong consensus regarding what we mean by wellbeing and how it can be measured."

"Regardless of which approach you adopt, the two frameworks come up with the same sorts of factors and, empirically, both approaches lead to the same list of indicators and outcome measures.

"The four capitals offer a consistent way of looking at the resources people have available to invest in their wellbeing – they're not measures of wellbeing, they're the resources we use to produce wellbeing," Smith explains.

From a policy perspective, this framework offers a robust and consistent way of evaluating the quality and availability of those resources for different people in different settings – and our ongoing ability to invest in and grow these capitals for the future. This approach enables a number of important policy conversations.

Statistics NZ and Treasury are currently working on developing a suite of supporting indicators that will help us measure and track wellbeing. In addition to making it easier for people to measure the level of wellbeing, the intent is that people can explore the distribution and inherent trade-offs between different capitals.

"We need to know the distribution of outcomes across the country and what the gaps look like both vertically, between the top and bottom, and horizontally, between Māori, Pākehā, male and female,

The wellbeing of democracy

One of the other exciting possibilities of the wellbeing framework, at least for philosophy lecturer Dan Weijers (University of Waikato), is its potential to refocus politics on what really matters.

Dan Weijers

"Internationally, we've seen the growing trend of a sort of politics of personality. As members of the public engage more and more with digital media and less and less with the machinery of government, there is a risk that people vote based on which political personalities they like best, rather than which policy platforms they believe are best for the country," Weijers explains.

"This raises numerous challenges, not least of which is the fact that these perceptions of political personalities are being largely derived through heavily filtered social media platforms that have biases built into the algorithms they use to present content."

Weijers highlights the wellbeing framework as a way of potentially focusing both politicians and members of the public on issues of public and social policy beyond personalities.

"If the framework could be constructed and presented in a way that is intuitive and reflects what matters to everyday New Zealanders, it could become a reference point in pre-election cycles – enabling us to evaluate the policy position of each party in relation to the various trade-offs across different dimensions of wellbeing and for evaluating actual policies once they are implemented.

"There's an opportunity each time we conduct the census to include questions about what matters most to New Zealanders and ensure the framework remains up-to-date," Weijers adds.

"If we really got behind this, it could be a powerful force for creating genuine dialogue between New Zealanders and governing bodies, and it could help protect our democracy from devolving into personality politics. The events of recent weeks suggest this might be more timely than we thought."

young and old," Smith explains.

"We also need to look at whether we see the same people represented in the same positions for each indicator – the 'joint distribution of outcomes'," Smith adds. "Knowing whether those in the bottom 5 percent for poverty, for health, and for social inclusion are the same sets of people and communities is really significant. It helps highlight any geographic or demographic dimensions to the issue.

"We also need to consider the spill-over effects and trade-offs between different capitals. Health is a key dimension of wellbeing that has a number of positive spill-over effects for education and employment.

"Conversely, we might see a way to improve incomes through dairy intensification but at the expense of water quality, or we see a way to benefit one community but it comes at the expense of another. Our wellbeing framework needs to enable us to consider each of these dimensions," Smith adds.

Co-designing our indicators

Statistics NZ have been running a collaborative development process with stakeholders across the country to identify what matters most to New Zealanders when it comes to wellbeing and to begin identifying a suite of supporting indicators.

"We're developing a comprehensive suite of around 100 indicators that cover environmental, social, cultural, and economic measures," Eleisha Hawkins, Director – Office of the Government Statistician and Chief Executive, explains.

"That may seem like a lot, and you wouldn't focus or report on all 100 at the same time. The comprehensive approach recognises that while issues of natural capital (such as environmental sustainability, land use, water quality) might be the current priority, in the future, it might focus more on aspects of social capital. Our aim is to build that longevity and flexibility into the framework from the beginning."

Eleisha Hawkins

Stats NZ ran a public consultation during July, August, and September, followed by a series of technical data workshops and further consultation with iwi and other stakeholders, exploring what matters most to New Zealanders and their communities.

"Our aim is to launch the final suite of indicators in March 2019, with an interactive website later in the year that will allow people to interrogate and filter the data themselves," Hawkins adds.

"What we've heard the most often from people is that whatever is produced needs to enable communities and local groups to see themselves in the data. There's huge potential for this at a local level, as well as the more obvious public policy opportunities.

"Local councils are accountable for supporting the wellbeing of their communities but often have no way of gathering data, or are left to make the best of data that's drawn from wider regional boundaries.

"For somewhere like Masterton City Council, that means trying to work with Wellington regional data, which includes areas such as Wellington CBD. It really reduces the utility of the data. They need data at a local level – we're hoping to be able to achieve that," Hawkins explains.

"Local councils are accountable for supporting the wellbeing of their communities but often have no way of gathering data."

"When we went and spoke to different communities, we also heard a number of really great local initiatives that community groups want to be able to measure the impact of. We want the final framework to be brought into by New Zealanders, not just by officials.

"We also hope it will help people understand the connection and relationships between different aspects of wellbeing by making it easier for people to explore trade-offs, potential blind spots, and how the decisions we make today impact our future," Hawkins adds.

"It's an exciting, and at times daunting, initiative to be part of. We look forward to seeing where it all leads."

Find out more

You can read Treasury's approach to the Living Standards Framework at https://treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-02/tp-approach-to-lsf.pdf

Privileged to pursue her passion

A conversation with Katie Bruce

Katie Bruce

Dr Katie Bruce left her policy job and took a pay cut to pursue her passion for social justice, first as JustSpeak Director and now as the new Chief Executive of Volunteering New Zealand. She spoke with* Public Sector's *ROSE NORTHCOTT about her career, her respect for young people, and how volunteers are making a multi-billion-dollar contribution to this country but remain undervalued.

What inspired your passion for social justice?

I grew up in the UK with my dad, running a charity that worked alongside people with disabilities, and I've always had a really strong sense of social justice. I started volunteering at school, setting up the student council and starting initiatives to get young people's voices heard. I campaigned for 16-year-olds to get the vote and set up awards to empower young people. All around me I saw that young people's voices weren't getting heard, and as a young person, I wanted to change that.

My white privilege and education have opened up opportunities for me. I am also Roma, the most marginalised population across Europe. I have only really reflected on that much more recently, and that's been a real learning curve for me in understanding my identity, my privilege, and my responsibility to use that privilege.

Tell us about your university days and early career?

I studied criminology at university and then got a scholarship to do a master's and PhD in sociology. University gave me a chance to study injustice. It gave me the language and social theory and helped me contextualise what I was seeing and feeling.

On graduating, I got a job at Southampton University researching volunteering. It was a two-year contract, and as I was finishing, I was pregnant. I certainly didn't see myself getting another academic job as it was so competitive. I had no idea what I'd do. The more I studied, the further away I seemed to get from myself and where I wanted to be.

Then my husband was made redundant, so we came to New Zealand on holiday while we figured out what to do with our lives, and we didn't go back.

You found work in the public sector. Why did that ultimately fuel your desire to work outside government?

After applying for about 30 jobs, I got a job working as a youth analyst at the Ministry of Social Development. I landed myself with an awesome team and an amazing manager. I learnt that many people within the public sector cared about social justice just as much as people outside it, and that was a really important lesson for me.

I also found out that I'm very impatient, and I wasn't sure whether I was making things better or worse for people. The things I was working on as a policy analyst seemed so far removed from people's lives. I also found the bureaucracy frustrating.

I then went to SuPERU as a senior analyst, working at the interface of research and policy to encourage the use of evidence in decision making. After two years, I knew I wanted to leave the public sector and try something different.

I realised that getting out of academia and exposing myself to other roles had been a good idea, but I just seemed to find myself even further away from that feisty teenager who was going to change the world and be true to her values.

What appealed about the JustSpeak Director's role?

JustSpeak is a movement of young people who are advocating for positive and transformative change in criminal justice, supporting them to speak out on criminal justice in an evidence-based way.

I saw the ad and said to my husband this is my absolute dream job. It combines campaigning, working with young people and criminal justice, and using research skills. No way did I think I would get the job. I'd never even led another person let alone an organisation, and my career was very much in research and policy rather than campaigning. But I got it.

> ***That's been a real learning curve for me in understanding my identity, my privilege, and my responsibility to use that privilege.***

How challenging was your first leadership role?

It was new in every way and was the steepest learning curve I could ever imagine. I'd been used to having concentrated time working on discrete projects. Suddenly I was responsible for other people and a whole organisation, dealing with everything from TV appearances to ensuring we had enough money for the next month's pay, arranging funding bids, and organising events. It was an environment where I could make decisions for myself and effectively the whole sector, which was amazingly liberating and terrifying all at the same time.

What did you get out of that role?

I'm really proud that we've got 17-year-olds out of the adult justice system. That will affect thousands of 17-year-olds, but it's just a tiny part of what needs to change.

And the personal development opportunities and friends I made was huge.

Young people get a bad rap for not being engaged, and that has been so far from my experience at JustSpeak and other organisations. I met so many passionate and really skilled young people changing their communities and making a real difference.

What prompted you to go for the Volunteering New Zealand role?

Given my role at JustSpeak, there were not many roles I would even glance at a second time, but this one – it grabbed me for a couple of reasons. It was a new challenge. I really care passionately about criminal justice, but the more I worked in it, the more I could see how inter-linked the issues are, for example, criminal justice, health, and housing. I thought here's a chance to work on capacity building as an organisation, advocating for volunteering across a lot of different areas. Also, an organisation like JustSpeak is young and fresh, and it can only stay like that if you keep having new ideas and new people engaged.

Katie (right) giving evidence to the Social Services Select Committee

What does Volunteering New Zealand do?

We are the voice of volunteering. A national body with members including regional volunteer centres around the country that support people to get involved in volunteering, as well as national NGOs and public sector organisations like Plunket, Youthline, and Auckland DHB. We advocate for volunteering and build capacity in the sector. We develop a lot of resources, run national volunteer week and student volunteer week and we advocate for volunteering to be valued and resourced.

We are funded through a mix of government grants, membership fees, and consultancy – we are increasingly offering organisations opportunities to develop capacity best practice in managing volunteers.

Who volunteers?

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of volunteering in the world, nearly half of us volunteer in some capacity. If it suddenly stopped, much of what we took for granted would just grind to a halt.

Some people think of a volunteer as a certain kind of person – actually it's all kinds of people. I'm keen to shake up the image of volunteering!

What does volunteering contribute to New Zealand?

There is visible volunteering that people see, whether planting trees or supporting people in hospital and reading at school. But there is also a huge amount of volunteering that we just don't see, such as the JustSpeak campaign work.

It's estimated that volunteering contributes $3.5 billion annually to the economy, the same as the construction industry, so it's huge. We've just made a submission on the government's wellbeing indicator project, arguing that volunteering contributes to the wellbeing of individual volunteers and that it should be recognised and supported.

What are some of your priorities?

To develop more in-house resources and advocate for volunteering to be measured and valued. Better measurements and understanding the impact of volunteering in communities is the first step in valuing it more.

It is a challenging sector because volunteering is undervalued and under-resourced. Volunteering isn't free; it has a cost for organisations to support people properly to engage in volunteering.

There is definitely an increase in employee volunteering. I'm interested in how we make this a strategic and transformative experience and make sure that it is actively contributing to communities.

I'm also interested in making sure that we are future-proofing our sector, so we are looking for how younger generations want to be engaged in volunteering, rather than trying to fit them into our current model.

It's estimated that volunteering contributes $3.5 billion annually to the economy, the same as the construction industry.

The public sector is already very engaged in volunteering, for example, in hospitals and prisons. We are keen to engage and see how we can embed volunteering opportunities into public organisations.

What are the benefits and challenges of a career in social justice?

I certainly took a pay cut when I left the public sector. I'm lucky enough to be earning an above-average wage and be able to make those kinds of choices. It's a huge privilege to get paid for work that you love and are passionate about – that's the ultimate goal.

I do see a lot of burn-out in NGOs, especially among people working on campaigns. You can feel you are working on something for so long and there is no progress or you are actually moving backwards. I was campaigning in criminal justice at the same time the prison population was rapidly increasing. So having positive experiences and a good support network outside of work is critical.

I would never have believed I'd be in this job when I was filling out all those job applications and couldn't even get an interview. Obviously having a PhD helped me get in the front door, but sometimes if people are given the opportunity, even when they haven't done this type of work, they can flourish with the right support. I'd love to see more young people in leadership roles.

MAKING ROADS SAFER

The road toll is on the rise. TONY FISHER and CATH MORRISON from Safe Roads talk to SIMON MINTO about the work they're doing to make New Zealand's roads safer.

It's summer. You're heading out to the coast. The road winds pleasantly through the hills, passing patches of swamp, spikes of cabbage trees, and dots of sheep.

The road's not wide – you barely notice that you've slowed down as you ease the wheel one way and then the other, the fields passing you by as though your car is on a gentle slide. Then you see it, a blur in the mirror – a dark blur. You round a corner and it's gone, and then it instantly fills your mirror. Yes, the grill of a grey or off-black or jet-black four-wheel drive – why are they all the same non-colour? You can't make out a face through the windscreen, but there's a manicured beard, red cheeks, and fly-like dark glasses. You grip the wheel and feel you should speed up to keep out of his way. You're suddenly not enjoying it. You take the next corner faster than you want. Then a dark surge blasts past, even though there was barely 20 metres of straight road. It disappears. You're relieved it's gone, but you're also enraged. No wonder the road toll is so high when there are psychopaths out there whose only interest is to sweep everyone else out of the way.

It's not all about drivers

Road safety is a major issue in New Zealand, and after years of a general decline, the number of deaths and injuries on the road has started to creep its way up, especially since 2013. When we think of the cause of injuries or deaths on the road, we tend to think first of driver behaviour, but that's just one of the factors in road safety according to Safe Roads Director, Tony Fisher, and Communication and Engagement Lead, Cath Morrison, who are part of an alliance formed to deliver the NZ Transport Agency's Safe Roads and Roadsides Programme. The design of the road and what's beside it, how vehicles are made, and speed are equally important.

This is known as a Safe System approach to road safety and was adopted in New Zealand in 2010. The Safe System approach has been used successfully in countries like Sweden, which has seen a massive reduction in road deaths in spite of a doubling in the number of cars and kilometres travelled. Although Sweden still does a lot of work on driver behaviour, the focus on making roads safer has had a dramatic effect. Safe Roads is taking a similar approach, while other work is done by the Transport Agency, the police, and others to improve driver behaviour, vehicle safety, and other parts of the system.

Communities know their roads

Through the Safe Roads programme, the NZ Transport Agency and its alliance are taking an innovative approach to fixing roads: they go into communities and find out what is and isn't working, then they work with the community to find the best solutions. This connection between roads and communities is critical. Instead of having "experts" coming in and imposing their solutions, the alliance starts with the community. "Every community is unique," says Cath, "and the members of the community are the experts on their roads."

The communities often have ideas that the experts had never even thought of and have local knowledge that external advisers wouldn't know about. A tour business might have set up, and suddenly there are groups of people walking across the road when there was no one crossing the road before. The local drivers are used to the road being clear at all times. A contractor might have moved in and she regularly drives slow-moving vehicles along a section of road.

> ***"The members of the community are the experts on their roads."***

A new housing development might have been set up a few kilometres away, but people are finding it's quicker to get into town if they drive through a small settlement that's never had through-traffic and never had lots of cars driving at highway speed. Maybe people regularly walk beside the road or ride horses. These are things that you wouldn't know from simply looking at the road. You need to live in a community to know what the issues are, and it's this community knowledge that the alliance wants to tap into. An expert might arrive to say they are here to solve a problem and the community responds with "We didn't know there was one" or "There's a problem, but it's not that."

Malcolm and Sharlene Barnett with Krystal's memorial

Krystal Bennett was just 18 years old when she was killed in a head-on crash in 2005.

A car driven by a woman on methamphetamine crossed the centre line and collided with Krystal's car. Krystal survived long enough to tell someone her name. A 12-year-old boy, a passenger in the other car, was also killed. Krystal's parents, Malcolm and Sharlene Barnett, campaigned for a flexible road safety barrier on the road so no one else would have to face what they have been through.

Sharlene believes all high-risk rural highways should have safety barriers and encourages communities to get behind safety improvements on their roads. "The cost of losing our daughter was astronomical," she says. "No family should ever go through what we did. Safety barriers are simple things, but they work. If a safety barrier had been in place that head-on crash wouldn't have happened and Krystal would be here with us today."

To find out more about safety barriers, go to nzta.govt.nz/flexible-barriers

A community event discussing improvements to the Ashley to Belfast section of State Highway 1 in North Canterbury

Unintended benefits

Tony says there can be unintended benefits to making safer roads. For example, a median barrier was put in on a busy road. The point was to make the road safer for traffic, but it also meant that cars leaving houses beside the road could only turn left and not make the more dangerous right turn. The community has since reported multiple benefits. Removing the right-hand turn has made the road safer, but an additional benefit is that when they put in the median barrier, they had to put in a turning bay at the end of the road. This has proved to be a perfect place for the school bus to stop, and now children can safely catch and get off the bus instead of waiting beside and crossing the busy road. When they put the barrier in, they never imagined these would be some of the benefits.

"If you make a mistake, you shouldn't have to die for it."

The alliance operates on the very true assumption that we all make mistakes. You might look away for a second to grab your sunglasses, and in that instant, the road has narrowed, or you might look a bit longer at a view as you round a corner and you're suddenly too close to the centre. It's not just the bad drivers who make mistakes, we all do. Safe Roads is about minimising the consequences for those mistakes and making roads more forgiving. "If you make a mistake, you shouldn't have to die for it," says Tony.

What kinds of changes are being considered?

"It's surprising how effective barriers are," Tony says. A side and median barrier means you won't hit a tree or drive into another vehicle. Rumble strips will immediately tell you you're veering off. Wide centre lines and shoulders, better signs and road markings, and realigning curves and intersections are all methods that work. But sometimes changes can be simpler. Just shifting the bus stop can allow people to wait and cross the road safely.

Like anything to do with infrastructure, Safe Roads has to deal with expectations. Before undertaking any work, it makes sure there is going to be benefit and value for everyone, but often some requests require too many resources or will benefit only a few in the community.

"We use a holistic 'system' approach," says Tony. "This means weighing up all the options and finding the one that gives the best outcome for the most people. We focus on what they can fix, and what will get results."

How does Safe Roads engage with communities?

"It's not all tea and Tim-Tams," says Cath. Their community engagement managers appear at community events like A&P shows or school galas. From there, they use existing community networks as much as possible so they can accurately gauge the issues and the feelings behind them. "We try to go into informal areas." Cath has also noticed that people are more likely to support changes to their roads if they felt they were involved in the decisions.

She's also found that changes to the road can change behaviour as well. "If there's a barrier in the middle of the road and a rumble strip on the left, people are likely to drive more carefully." Having improved roads makes drivers more aware of the dangers. When we drive, we try to avoid the rumble strips and keep a distance from barriers, meaning that we often slow down.

The learnings from Safe Roads are also helping with the next steps in making New Zealand's roads more forgiving. With the latest Government Policy Statement on Transport putting an increased emphasis on safety, the Transport Agency has introduced the Safe Networks programme, which will deliver proven safety interventions, safe speeds, and safe level crossings on high-risk routes across New Zealand.

"If there's a barrier in the middle of the road and a rumble strip on the left, people are likely to drive more carefully."

So when you see that threatening gleaming chrome grill in your mirror, just remember that while the Transport Agency is doing what it can to change drivers, it's just one part of the puzzle. You don't need to be a bad driver to make a mistake, and if you do, the work of the Safe Roads programme might just save your life.

Some examples of the community engagement by Safe Roads

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TASMAN DISTRICT

In the fourth of our articles on local government, BRIAR EDMONDS looks at a district that has multiple natural resources but also presents very special and significant challenges to the local council: the Tasman District.

When the universe was handing out goodies, the Tasman District certainly got lucky.

With its golden beaches, national parks, incredible scenery, and lots of sunshine hours, the Tasman District is a blessed place.

The region's economy is driven by horticulture, fishing, forestry, and tourism. The Tasman District grows all New Zealand's commercial hops and boasts 11 craft breweries, 25 boutique wineries, and plenty of orchards growing berries, apples, and other fruit. The ocean's produce has made Port Nelson the largest fishing port in Australasia. Tourism income is another critical moneymaker for the region, too.

But alongside its beauty and bounty, the Tasman District and its local council face real challenges.

Water shortages

Water is one of the most pressing challenges on the Tasman District Council's agenda. Hot, dry summers mean water shortages become a worry most years for residents and the busy horticulture industry. According to a 2016 report from Waimea Water, if nothing is done to stem water shortages, they could cost the Nelson-Tasman region $700 million over 25 years in lost production.

One proposal to help address the problem is the $80 million Waimea Community Dam, which would use a section of conservation land in the Mount Richmond State Forest Park. It proposes to protect the Tasman District's horticultural industry from water shortages and allow further horticultural development. The dam is also billed as providing a solution to the long-term problem of sourcing the district's drinking water.

Having been on the drawing board for more than a decade, the dam project has been dogged by disagreement over funding, as well as general opposition.

There has been dissent from some ratepayers who view the dam project as principally benefitting people who need to irrigate (that is, the horticulture industry) rather than the ratepayers who are paying for it.

Other concerns have been raised about ecological and environmental issues. For some, there's a worry that big irrigation schemes disrupt the variability of natural water flows and encourage intensive farming. This leads to an increase in pollution, especially nitrates.

The dam issue has become a political one. Marama Davidson, co-leader of the Green Party has recently been quoted as saying: "The Green Party believes that conservation land should be protected for its innate values and that the transfer of conservation land for use as part of a dam cannot be reconciled with the fundamental commitment to protect it for conservation.

"This dam is a 'think big' solution with significant downside risks. There are more sustainable and affordable ways to address the peak season water shortages facing the Tasman Region."

For a time, the project was taken off the table because the council was unable to pull together the funding, and it seemed unlikely to go ahead. However, the council's stars have recently aligned and it has now secured the funding. The Tasman District Council (Waimea Water Augmentation Scheme) Bill passed its first reading in parliament on 19 September.

> ***When the universe was handing out goodies, the Tasman District certainly got lucky.***

The bill seeks to gain an inundation easement over 9.67 hectares of conservation land, which is needed for the reservoir of the proposed dam. It also aims to vest in the council 1.35 hectares of Crown riverbed in the Lee Valley, where the dam will be built.

The council continues to work towards making the dam a reality, which it believes will protect the Tasman District's thriving horticultural sector, as well as its drinking water.

Ageing population

Like many parts of the country, a rapidly ageing population is another challenge facing the Tasman District Council.

The number of older people in Tasman District is expected to almost double over the next 20 years – the biggest increase in New Zealand as a proportion of its total population.

A report earlier this year revealed the number of residents aged 65 and over is projected to climb from 11,100 in 2018 to 20,500 by 2038.

As a proportion of the total population, this age group will jump from 22 percent to 36 percent, making the Tasman District population the second oldest in the country. In 2017, it was sixteenth.

By 2038, a huge 20 percent of the population – 11,500 residents – are expected to be aged 75 years and over.

> ***But alongside its beauty and bounty, the Tasman District and its local council face real challenges.***

The council is attempting to tackle the issue head on. It plans to develop an "age-friendly policy" and ensure its infrastructure and planning rules are suitable for this growing cohort of residents.

But this growing group also presents opportunities. Increasing numbers of people are working past 65. That may address potential labour market shortages, provide an increased number of volunteers, and open up business opportunities to meet the changing demographic patterns.

In 2013, a total of 22 percent of older Tasman District residents were still in employment with half working full time. That rate was similar to the national average of 21 percent but well above the rates in Canada (13 percent), Australia (12 percent), and the UK (10 percent).

Strong financial picture

To round out 2018, the council's books are looking strong. It ended the 2017–18 financial year with a debt that's $18 million lower than budgeted and an underlying operating surplus of about $2.4 million.

This result is impressive given the council had to face extreme weather in the form of ex-cyclones Fehi and Gita in February. These caused widespread damage and upheaval and required an expensive, time-intensive clean-up.

"This dam is a 'think big' solution with significant downside risks. There are more sustainable and affordable ways to address the peak season water shortages facing the Tasman Region."

Tasman Mayor Richard Kempthorne says the annual report was an important part of the council's accountability to the community, reporting back on its achievements, challenges, and financial management for the year.

"We've ended the year with a net debt position of $141 million, $18 million lower than forecast and well under our self-imposed debt cap of $200 million. I'm also pleased this year's rates income increase was just 0.63 percent (excluding growth) – significantly less than the 2.16 percent increase forecast and also well below the self-imposed 3 percent rates cap.

"The financial picture for the year is strong, and I'm really proud of that. We will continue to be careful with our finances and maintain our debt and rates caps. However, the numbers only tell a small part of the story. The work we do is about providing the infrastructure, facilities, and services our community needs

Split Apple Rock, Abel Tasman National Park

to flourish, about safeguarding our environment and natural treasures, and about working with our communities to achieve more than any of us could alone."

By 2038, a huge 20 percent of the population – 11,500 residents – are expected to be aged 75 years and over.

Mr Kempthorne says the annual report outlined some of the work the council had carried out to achieve those goals, including completion of the Queen Street upgrade and Saxton Velodrome projects, support for the Te Waikoropupu Springs Water Conservation Order application, and progress on securing funding for the Waimea Dam.

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Discovering what works

Five years ago, the UK government established the What Works Network. The idea was to ensure all policy making and service delivery was based on evidence. It was an impressive undertaking and one of the first times a national approach had been used to put evidence at the centre of decision making. SHELLY FARR BISWELL reports on how it's looking five years later.

The What Works Network consists of 10 independent centres that cover a range of issues from ageing to education, crime reduction, and local economic growth.

The What Works Network consists of seven full members and three affiliate centres.

Full-member centres	Year established
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	1999
Education Endowment Foundation	2011
Early Intervention Foundation	2013
College of Policing's What Works Centre for Crime Reduction	2013
What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth	2013
What Works Centre for Wellbeing	2014
Centre for Ageing Better	2015
Affiliate centres	
What Works Scotland	2014
Wales Centre for Public Policy	2017
What Works Centre for Children's Social Care	2017

In broad terms, the centres have three functions: to find evidence of what's working, to translate that evidence so that it's accessible to the people who need it, and to encourage the adoption and use of that evidence.

In describing the work of the network, What Works National Advisor Dr David Halpern wrote in *The What Works Network: Five Years On*: "Though we still have a long way to go, the What Works approach, and the more robust methods on which it is founded – such as the use of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and the more systematic analysis of what is working where and why – is rapidly becoming the new normal."

Considering the evidence

Since the network was established, the 10 centres have produced or commissioned 48 comprehensive evidence reviews, as well as numerous rapid evidence reviews. These reviews have provided a foundation for developing policies and delivering services. For example, a trial on police wearing body-worn cameras showed that the cameras reduced allegations against the police by a third and increased the amount of video evidence available to prosecute violent crime. Based on the evidence, 22,000 London police officers have been issued with body-worn cameras.

Each centre has its own methodology in how it undertakes reviews, but all follow a similar process that includes working with academic and user panels to identify and scope a review, considering available research, and drawing conclusions based on the research. As well as assessing research that's already available, many centres support primary research and work with researchers to identify and fill any information gaps.

Established in 2014, the What Works Centre for Wellbeing is one of the newer and smaller centres. Centre director Nancy Hey says the centre has a broad remit covering projects across government, businesses, universities, and several NGOs.

"One of the exciting aspects of having the network is that centres often act as bridges between theoretical and practical knowledge. For example, since being established, our centre has seen the academic discipline for wellbeing grow, which includes research being undertaken to fill information gaps," she says.

Nancy Hey

The centres use evidence from around the world. For Hey's centre, that has meant following the New Zealand government's work to develop Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand (wellbeing indicators).

As she adds, "What's just as crucial is how evidence is used and adopted. Within our centre, we work to understand each profession and user group we're working with so that we can communicate the findings in a way that is relevant and practical.

"We also aim to present findings with curiosity. 'How do these findings compare with your experience?' There needs to be an ongoing dialogue about what evidence shows and what practitioners experience."

Making a lasting impact

As the *Five Years On* report states: "If the What Works initiative is to have lasting impact, the interventions and programmes that are shown to work need to be widely adopted."

Professor Jonathan Sharples, who has been seconded to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which is the What Works Centre focused on education, and two University College London (UCL) colleagues completed a review of the What Works Network in July 2018. He says that their research shows that as centres become more established, they are placing more emphasis on working with stakeholders to understand and use the evidence available.

Jonathan Sharples

"The initial emphasis for centres is often on aggregating and synthesising the evidence that's already available. When centres begin to mobilise that research and work more closely with end-users, there is often a significant increase in supporting the uptake of that evidence," he says.

As described in the UCL review: "… as the Centres have developed, they have begun to take a more bi-directional view that goes beyond the traditional 'push' (production) model of research where evidence is generated then disseminated, interpreted, and used. The Centres have increasingly recognised the additional 'pull' (demand) processes where users inform research production to ensure that the outputs meet their needs (in terms of perspectives, topic content, and format)."

Sharples says EEF is one example of this shift in emphasis. As teachers and school administrators engage more with evidence-based approaches, they have also started to contribute by evaluating evidence and developing innovations that are then trialled.

"The profession – teachers, head teachers, and school administrators – have become real advocates for evidence-based practice. Robust, well-communicated evidence alongside practitioner expertise is extremely empowering," he says.

David Halpern highlights just how big this shift has been in his foreword to the *Five Years On* report: "Education is perhaps the most dramatic. Within the space of five years, more than 10,000 studies have been compiled, and more than a hundred large-scale RCTs have been conducted, involving nearly a million children. In so doing, debates that were once dominated by dogma are now driven by evidence. It is a game-changer."

"The profession – teachers, head teachers, and school administrators – have become real advocates for evidence-based practice."

EEF is now scaling up several small trials that have shown encouraging results. This will create an opportunity for more schools to engage with evidence, as well as help determine if the trial results can be replicated.

Part of a system

While the centres are part of the What Works Network, they each have different audiences, funding arrangements, administrative processes, and accountability systems. What's essential for each centre is that it's meeting the needs of its identified stakeholders.

As Jonathan Sharples explains, "The centres aren't and shouldn't be the same. Each centre needs to be relevant and complementary to the sector it's working within."

In addition, centres are at different stages of development. At one end of the spectrum is the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), which was established in 1999 to reduce variations in the availability and quality of health care. As the oldest and largest centre, NICE is well integrated in the health care system, with its role clearly defined in the UK's Health and Social Care Act 2012. At the other end are several centres that are relatively new and have emerging agendas.

Nancy Hey says that while each centre is unique, there are basic principles that all the centres adhere to: "It's essential that we conduct a robust assessment of evidence and make our findings relevant to user groups."

In so doing, debates that were once dominated by dogma are now driven by evidence.

And, while each centre operates individually, their connection as part of the What Works Network allows centres to share ideas and resources, as well as work together on complex projects.

Humility required

As David Halpern wrote in his foreword to *Five Years On*: "Policy makers and professionals are far too ready to conclude that existing practice is effective – that they already know 'what works'. In this sense, the first step to more effective policy and practice is not fancy methods, but simple humility."

Jonathan Sharples agrees. "Using an empirical approach can be very humbling and very challenging. You need to set aside your ideologies and preconceived notions. Results can be very sobering where we're learning not only what works, but what doesn't."

He says one of the challenges can be a lack of commitment in implementing evidence-based interventions.

"That's where we have found having champions and mentors within the profession invaluable. We get much better uptake if practitioners can share their stories and experiences with their colleagues. After all, evidence is only helpful if it's being used."

Making evidence count

Last year, EEF published results from one of the largest RCTs ever conducted in education. Over 13,000 schools were involved in the evaluation, which looked at engaging with schools about research findings. The evaluation underscored the fact that just making users aware of evidence is not enough.

"In this sense, the first step to more effective policy and practice is not fancy methods, but simple humility."

Three key lessons learned from the evaluation include:

- Traditional communication channels should be just one strand of a multi-faceted approach when sharing evidence.
- There needs to be a bridge between translation and adoption. For example, in the education sector there's a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the benefits of in-school coaching and mentoring to support changes in classroom behaviours.
- There's a need to ensure capacity and skills exist within user groups to understand and effectively implement the evidence.

The team at EEF have used the findings from this evaluation to help establish a Research Schools Network. They are also rolling out a series of campaigns and developing sector-led training to encourage the use of evidence.

Find out more

The report on the network, *The What Works Network: Five Years On* report (January 2018), is available at www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network

The report *UK What Works Centres* (July 2018) by David Gough, Chris Maidment and Jonathan Sharples, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, University College London is available at https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/UK%20what%20works%20centres%20study%20final%20report%20july%202018.pdf?ver=2018-07-03-155057-243

A blog by Jonathan Sharples about the EEF evaluation is available at https://theeducationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/untangling-the-literacy-octopus/

MINISTERS, MINDERS, AND MANDARINS

Dr Chris Eichbaum

Richard Shaw

As can be seen in the article on page 28, political advisers play a big part in how government works, yet in many ways, we know little about them. MARGARET MCLACHLAN speaks to CHRIS EICHBAUM and RICHARD SHAW about their recent book, which shines some light on the practices and problems of political advisers.

A "mandarin" is defined as a person who has a very important job in the government and who is sometimes considered to be too powerful. It's a term that could apply to political advisers – those staff who work for Ministers and act as a conduit and/or a gatekeeper between public servants and Ministers.

It's an area of research that has occupied Dr Chris Eichbaum of Victoria University of Wellington's School of Government and Massey University Professor of Politics Richard Shaw for over 15 years. Their latest book, *Ministers, Minders and Mandarins*, shines a light on the role and explores the effect of political advisers in 10 parliamentary democracies, including New Zealand.

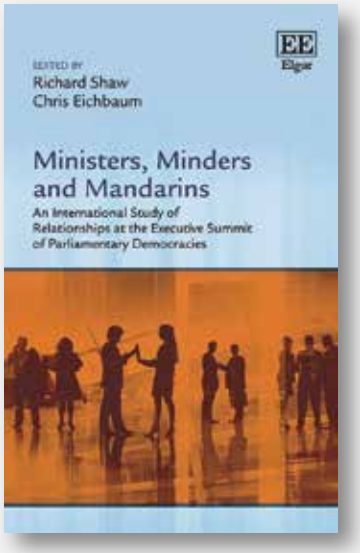
Chris Eichbaum explains his interest: "I had been employed in the role of political adviser for two periods (1989–90 and 1999–2002) and was surprised and concerned that I didn't know the ground rules of engagement with public servants. While I recall positive working relationships with my public service colleagues, we stumbled our way through the dark."

Later, in 2005, Eichbaum and Shaw embarked on academic research into political advisers and their potential risk to political neutrality. They surveyed senior public servants, current and former political advisers, and Ministers, giving a complete picture and enabling comparisons with other countries.

"In 2017, we decided to repeat the survey and had 640 respondents drawn from the IPANZ membership. We replicated questions from 2005 and added some new open-ended questions around free and frank advice and the effect of the Official Information Act. The result was a rich resource and gives robust evidence that all is not well and that 'free and frank advice' is not getting through to Ministers," Eichbaum says.

Eichbaum and Shaw, in the introduction to *Ministers, Minders and Mandarins*, note that political advisers are common in parliamentary democracies worldwide, but they are a recent feature of democracies from the Westminster system. The 10 case studies consider how advisers can funnel or politicise departmental advice, how they impact on governance in the core executive, and how they affect the "the balanced triangle" of public servants, Ministers, and political advisers.

Shaw says there is a great variation in the role and scope of political advisers in other countries: "They do things differently over there." For example, some advisers are located in ministerial offices and some are in "cabinets", and then in Germany, it's different again. The number of advisers per Minister varies from 40 in Greece to only one or two in Holland, and several countries, including Germany, Greece, Ireland, and Holland, have no formal code of conduct for political advisers.



New Zealand is a latecomer to formal regulation; a code of conduct for political advisers (we call them ministerial advisers) was approved only in September 2017. Nor are ministerial advisers subject to public record – an Official Information Act (OIA) request is the only way of finding out how many there are.

Eichbaum says the code of conduct is a good start for providing the "rules of engagement", but it contains no detailed procedural guidance – only that advisers are to "behave in ways that are fair, professional, responsible and trustworthy".

"We still need greater guidance, other than the current aspirational code, and a commitment to professional development. The risk is that political advisers will operate in a vacuum, and we need to turn the lights on."

He says another finding from the 2017 research was that political advisers are here to stay; every Minister's office has

an adviser. They are seen as adding value and assisting the quality of governance, for example, in MMP inter-party discussions.

"But there are risks; our respondents say political advisers can interfere in the communication of information between government departments and Ministers."

Results from the research showed:

- 39.6 percent believe that the risks posed by ministerial advisers to public sector neutrality has increased over time
- 53.6 percent think that public servants are less likely to provide their Minister with comprehensive and free and frank advice (unchanged from 2005)
- 41.2 percent believe the OIA is impeding the provision of free and frank advice.

"Public servants (who responded to the survey) said they were less likely to give free and frank advice to Ministers. There was the issue of self-censorship; that they were giving the Minister information that the Minister wanted to hear," Eichbaum says.

Shaw says political advisers might not be the problem in preventing advice getting through to Ministers – some respondents saw a problem with senior management stepping aside and allowing the erosion of advice.

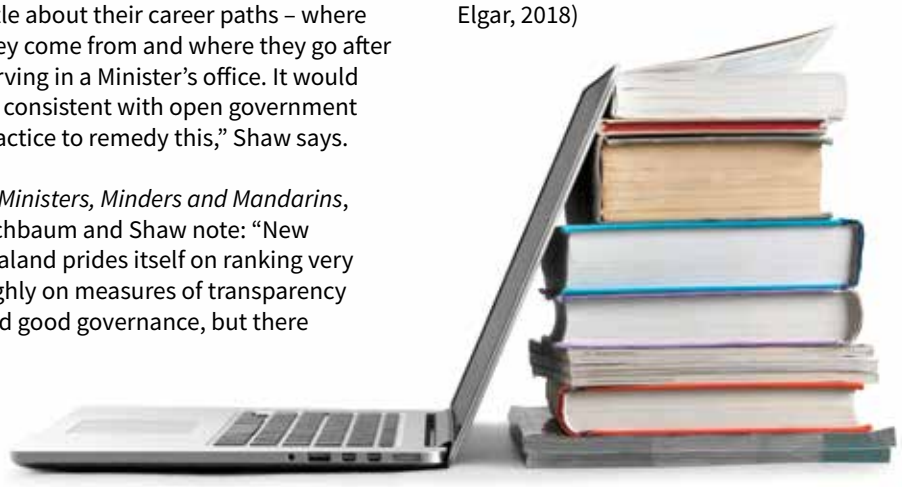
He says further research could be done with political advisers themselves.

"I'm interested in what's on the public record. Political advisers hold influential positions; they have direct access to Ministers' thoughts. But we understand little about their career paths – where they come from and where they go after serving in a Minister's office. It would be consistent with open government practice to remedy this," Shaw says.

In *Ministers, Minders and Mandarins*, Eichbaum and Shaw note: "New Zealand prides itself on ranking very highly on measures of transparency and good governance, but there are weaknesses in the fabric of accountability that could easily tear."

The public sector, Ministers, and political advisers need to keep having the debate around the balance between free and frank discussions and the transparency of public information. Eichbaum and Shaw's research is an important contribution to this discussion.

Richard Shaw and Chris Eichbaum (eds), *Ministers, Minders and Mandarins, An International Study of Relationships at the Executive Summit of Parliamentary Democracies* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2018)



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Wellbeing
IN THE WORKPLACE

We spend huge chunks of our lives in workplaces. How they are run can affect our entire sense of self-worth. Columnist and playwright DAVE ARMSTRONG takes a look at what wellbeing in the workplace might look like – and what it certainly doesn't look like.

Ask any employer or manager if they run a good workplace and their answer will invariably be yes. In a workplace where employees sigh loudly and even drift off to sleep in the afternoon, the manager is likely to say that staff find the work challenging and stimulating. In a business where some employees feel bullied or threatened by the boss, the boss is likely to say that they are firm but fair – or else they will have absolutely no idea bullying is going on.

The trouble with wellbeing in the workplace is that it's one of those issues that everyone agrees on – in principle. Of course it's good that employees feel safe, stimulated, and valued. It's the actual practice where things get tricky.

We are all aware of the bad workplace clichés – the boss that does a "berko" now and again, the bossy person in a low-status job who makes life hell for those with even lower-status jobs, and the creepy guy by the photocopier who leers at the young women who are simply trying to do their jobs. Then there's the overworked middle-aged person who is passed over for promotion who "loses their rag" and is off work for a week or two on anti-depressants.

Although those stereotypes still exist, New Zealanders have had some recent wake-up calls in terms of workplace wellbeing. Not everything is as well as we sometimes pretend it is. We now know that sexual harassment doesn't just happen by the photocopier, but is actually rife in our most prestigious law firms and in the public service.

Our politicians often speak about mental health but rarely focus on it in their own workplace. When an MP was recently committed to psychiatric care, you got the impression no one quite knew what to say or how to handle things. The discomfort was palpable.

Yet according to Australian research, about 20 percent of our workforce may suffer mental health disorders. I suspect in a high-pressure job such as being an MP, the percentage is even higher. And yet in New Zealand, we pretend that certain sectors of society are somehow above that sort of thing.

In the past, it was not possible for politicians to admit to stress or "losing it" – even though many did. When incidents occurred, they were quickly swept under the carpet and a bipartisan wall of silence descended. And silence is not the best way to deal with such issues.

"How's your friend doing in her new job," I recently asked a colleague whose friend had started a job in the entertainment industry – the job was so glamorous that most people would kill for it.

"Crying herself to sleep every night, but she's hopeful things will improve soon," was the reply.

We know that many people love their jobs. Many others loudly complain about various aspects of their jobs, but you can tell they find it satisfying most of the time. But some people find themselves deeply unhappy at work. Yet often none of their colleagues know, let alone their managers. Yes, there are unhappy people in the world, and their problems can often be related to factors outside the workplace. Yet in some cases, it's the workplace that can be the cause of the grief.

The research into wellbeing in the workplace is overwhelming. Employees who feel safe, who don't feel afraid to voice their opinions, and who like their colleagues are way more productive and have fewer sick days. So why doesn't everyone just create a fantastic workplace?

For a start, it can cost money – though far less than many employers think – but it also requires a change in attitude and leadership style. Apparently businesses are starting to invest more into research and development and productivity, but I wonder if workplace wellbeing is still seen as "nice to have". A toxic work environment can lead to high staff turnover, which not only costs money but has a corrosive effect on the stressed-out employees who remain.

So what does a healthy workplace look like? It doesn't have to be a modern office with the American cliché of staff gyms and "chill out" rooms full of bean bags. Sure, people want to be safe, secure, and healthy, but it's often non-physical things that make a work environment stand out.

Employees, especially those with families, enjoy flexibility. If a parent can leave early to pick up the kids or coach a sports team, they are more than likely to make up that time elsewhere. If they have motivated leaders who are driven by results rather than clock watching, then they will feel a personal responsibility to get the job done. Some employers worry about productivity when employees work at home, but I have seen some staff waste time just as well at work.

Given that countries that work fewer hours per week than we do are more productive, we need a mindset of effectiveness rather than hours spent on a task.

Staff also wish to feel included wherever they are from, whatever their ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. Asking someone who has recently arrived from China what they thought of the rugby test on Saturday night may be a well-intentioned attempt at diversity, but it is also futile.

I have often heard employers talk about an employee not "fitting in". But what employers often expect their staff to "fit into" is a rigid, male-dominated, and monocultural model. Janina may not "fit in" because she doesn't want to go to the rugby sevens, but what if she was offered free tickets to a play?

Healthy workplaces are not only safe and secure, but they're fun. In my experience, a job is rarely satisfying if there is absolutely no fun along the way. I don't mean young staff playing practical jokes or lame attempts by management at "cheer up" days. The brilliant British TV comedy *The Office* is a textbook case on how not to provide a good workplace, and it has resonated around the world. Boss David Brent's attempts to create a fun workplace are hilariously cringeworthy.

Sure, people want to be safe, secure, and healthy, but it's often non-physical things that make a work environment stand out.

But if people genuinely enjoy themselves for at least part of the day – whether it's chatting to other staff or doing an enjoyable activity together – they will be far more productive.

A recent European study found that for every 1 euro spent on wellbeing, there was a 2.5–4.8 euro return on investment. Buy that nice espresso machine for your staff now!

I recently spent a few weeks working in China. The workplace was rigid and formal and the hours long. However, after a particularly challenging week, the company drove the staff to a very nice though inexpensive restaurant. Out came some low-strength beer, and toasts were made.

The most serious management executive, whom one did not mess with, revealed herself in the restaurant to be warm and hilarious. As we ate fantastic food and toasted each other with various *gān bēi* (cheers), we all became friends for life. I wondered how I could get to know people who didn't speak my language in just two weeks better than people I'd worked with in New Zealand's often tight-lipped workplaces for years.

I'll never forget an experience I once had writing comedy. The writing team were apparently falling behind in productivity. The furious producer stormed in and boomed, "If these scripts don't get funnier, people are going to get fired!" Needless to say, the scripts that the terrified writers produced were even less funny than the previous batch.

In a subsequent job, the creative team was scolded by a manager for drinking too much coffee. There would be no fresh coffee until the end of the month! I hate to think of the productivity that was lost as we all trooped down to the local café, on principle, each morning and afternoon tea time.

By contrast, I was once employed on an out-of-town job, and the hotel I was staying in did not ask me for a credit card to cover miscellaneous expenses – my employer took care of it. But what would happen if I drank the minibar dry and ordered extravagant room service meals every night? "That would be a relatively inexpensive way of telling me that you can't be trusted and never to hire you again," replied my zen-like boss. That night, I drank one beer from the room minibar and paid for it myself.

The word that is often bandied about when describing a good workplace environment is family. And yes, it has become a cliché because it's often the most un-family-like corporate organisations who use the term. But as a sometime employer, I find a whānau-based approach, where employers show real concern about the wellbeing of their employees, and back up this concern with actions, is the approach that works best.

But if you manage to create a family environment and reap the rewards from increased productivity, you break up that whānau at your peril. When organisations restructure, many do it in a dispassionate and clinical way. Yes, restructuring can achieve positive results, but often management underestimates the loss of staff goodwill that accompanies big restructures.

I recently ran into a colleague wandering around town, taking a two-hour lunch break. Normally highly productive and very loyal, she had just been told a workplace restructure meant that a functional and close-knit team of four employees would now be applying for only two jobs. If she got the job, it would mean a young colleague lost theirs; if she didn't get the job she would be unemployed. As it happened, her two bright young colleagues easily found jobs elsewhere and resigned. The result of the restructure was to ruin morale among existing staff and lose staff who could make a great long-term contribution.

In terms of the public service, there is a danger that improving wellbeing in the workplace could become another box-ticking exercise of the type where a department believes they are bicultural because they have a bilingual letterhead and senior management have attended a half-day course on the Treaty of Waitangi.

Research shows employees don't want wellbeing improved because it increases productivity, they want to feel that their employers do it because they genuinely care about them.

Yet what happens if an employer wants to crack the whip and increase performance? Will they be accused of harming staff wellbeing? Whips can be cracked in intelligent and progressive ways. In my experience, it's the friendly, generous, and gently persuasive employers who manage to get extra effort out of staff far more than authoritarian whip-crackers.

Research shows employees don't want wellbeing improved because it increases productivity, they want to feel that their employers do it because they genuinely care about them.

Our prime minister recently talked about the value of kindness, and I think we should take her words on board. Workplace wellbeing is not just about calling in the consultants to work out ways of making staff happier to improve productivity – it's about management showing kindness and human decency. It involves caring about people's physical and mental health because you are concerned for them, not because you're worried about the financial consequences of them taking sick leave.

I have noticed an authoritarian and mean streak – though sometimes it's delivered in a passive-aggressive way – in the culture of some workplaces. A bit more generosity and trust could go a long way. And for goodness' sake, relax and have a bit of fun now and again.

IPANZ New Professionals Conference 2018

Future Lab: See the Future, Be the Future

MAX LIN of New Professionals runs through some of the highlights of the New Professionals 2018 Conference.

Max Lin

"It is important to support, protect, and nurture that spirit of service in the people who give expression to it every day. Especially those who are just starting out on their public service journey." Peter Hughes, State Services Commissioner

On 10 and 11 October, some of the brightest young public servants across the country came together in Wellington for the biennial IPANZ New Professionals Conference.

The theme for the conference was "Future Lab – See the Future, Be the Future" and was aimed at helping new professionals explore and prepare for the challenges and opportunities that are coming to the public sector.

The conference was held at Te Papa, in the heart of Wellington. There were over 100 people from various agencies, ranging from government departments, councils, and private sector organisations that work closely with the public sector. I was fortunate enough to attend as one of the organisers of the conference (led by Louise Reddiford and Ryan Angus) and as a committee member of IPANZ New Professionals.

The conference committee welcoming attendees on the first day

Day one – see the future

Anthony Richards, the IPANZ Vice President, opened the conference. He talked about some of the transformations already happening in the public sector, ranging from technology to globalisation, and encouraged attendees to engage with and embrace these changes.

This was followed by the keynote speaker Peter Hughes, the State Services Commissioner. He spoke about the pride and sense of purpose that came from working in the public service, and he wove it into his journey as a public servant, starting as a case manager at Work and Income.

He talked about change being a constant in the public service – from the state sector reforms that happened in the past to the proposed review underway today. These changes sought to make our work more client-centric, with the goal of making it easier to collaborate in the pursuit of the public good.

Naomi Ferguson, the Commissioner and Chief Executive of Inland Revenue, built on this theme of client-centricity and the need to

Peter Hughes, the State Services Commissioner, speaking to attendees about his journey in the public service and the central importance of "service"

increase diversity and inclusion in the public sector. This was an important obligation but also a necessary part of understanding the needs of New Zealanders and to earn their trust and confidence. She talked about the subtle difference between diversity and inclusion – "Diversity is being invited to a party, but genuine inclusion is being asked to dance." This meant that the public service not only needs to look like the people we are serving, but the work also needs to be meaningful and reflect the values and needs of our communities. The MC, Tamati Rimene-Sproat from Seven Sharp, then facilitated the first series of Q&As with Naomi, using a dedicated conference application.

The participants then had the opportunity to hear from two case studies that provided a glimpse of the future. The first case study by Te Puni Kokiri challenged some of the traditional modes of policy making. Instead of predetermining a framework and agenda, the organisation went out and engaged with tamariki at the earliest stages of the policy-making process to inform the scope and nature of their work, and they continued to involve their key stakeholders every step of the way. This was followed by a presentation by the Government Communication Security Bureau (GCSB) on how technology was changing the way the organisation works to make New Zealand safer. This showed that in the future with the emergence of new technologies, there needs to be a conversation with the public to build a consensus that maintains public confidence in the vital work that the government does.

An Insights Panel then discussed the future of technology and data in government. The panel talked about the disruption to the public service coming from developments such as big data and machine learning and how it can make the work we do more precise, but the panel also emphasised the importance of needing a human presence to complement these developments and round off their harshest edges.

"Diversity is being invited to a party, but genuine inclusion is being asked to dance."

A live poll conducted during the presentation showed that the attendees were optimistic about their future careers in the public service despite this technological disruption. However, change is coming – inevitably some roles will be replaced, but no doubt new frontiers will emerge. Therefore, it is crucial for young public

servants to think about the role they play and the skills they need in the future workplace, especially the need for ethics, empathy, and communication and the ability to make trade-offs and exercise judgment.

After lunch, the attendees got a taste of the issues they could encounter in the future with a simulated "War Game" run by Deloitte. Deloitte simulated a security crisis, and the attendees worked together on how to respond. Andrew Hampton, the chief executive of GSCB, then worked through the case study with the attendees.

At the end of a first day, attendees grabbed a drink at Mac's Brew Bar, which gave them the opportunity to reflect on the lessons from the day and to network with their peers.

Day two – be the future

The second day focused on the future. The day opened with Karen Tregaskis, Managing Partner at Tregaskis Brown, who talked about how to cultivate your best self. The first step when preparing for change is to know yourself. The session focused on identifying and developing our strengths. All attendees completed the VIA character strengths assessment, which ranked a list of key attributes – such as kindness, forgiveness, and hope. However, it was important for the attendees to realise that strengths can be highly subjective and team dependent – a strength could be a weakness if overplayed, and weaknesses could actually be strengths in the right context. This session set the attendees up for the workshops they were to attend for the rest of the day.

The attendees were optimistic about their future careers in the public service despite this technological disruption.

The day was then broken down into morning and afternoon workshops. The morning had three sessions, from which attendees could choose two. David Peddie from Project Plus talked about the growing importance of delivering "value" instead of "projects". Projects are also increasingly interlinked, and policy makers will need to focus not just on the analysis of policy but also on its implementation and delivery. Joan Costello's workshop focused on building the attendees' confidence in using te reo at work. While this was a small step, you could see attendees noticeably using te reo during the rest of the conference.

Joan Costello from Te Papa talking to attendees about how to be confident using te reo at work

The third session saw Jayne Russell and Louise Davidson and their team from the Ministry of Social Development speak about how to apply "design thinking" to policies and services. They gave examples from their work with the Auckland Co-Design Lab, which included transforming Work and Income offices by thinking about their different users. The attendees in this session also had a hands-on opportunity to experiment on how they would apply design thinking to the delivery of social services.

Louise Davidson from the Ministry of Social Development sharing her story on the transformation of their services after collaborating with the Auckland Co-Design Lab

In the afternoon, Andrea Thompson's workshop on leadership focused on busting leadership myths. Jane Moore and Paul Rayner from Parliamentary Services helped the attendees develop some important skills in navigating the workplace and how to manage relationships and conflicts. Georgie Ferrari from Wellington Community Trust talked about mindfulness, wellbeing, and self-care.

She cited a report that showed that mental illness will be the largest contributing factor of absence from work in the future. The workshop was important in helping attendees discover the way they work and, equally important, the type of workplaces they would want to work in and even create in the future.

After the workshops, and after two action-packed days, Georgina Beyer closed the conference speaking about fearlessness and making your own future. You could really feel her presence in the room. I think this was because she spoke truth to power and was unapologetic about being herself. I learnt that fearlessness is more than just having courage but being comfortable in our own skins. The future might change, but it is not all about adapting to the future. Sometimes for the future to actually change, and to survive all its uncertainty, you actually need to stay true to yourself.

Mental illness will be the largest contributing factor of absence from work in the future.

As both an organiser and as an attendee, the exposure to so many high calibre speakers and ideas often left me with more questions than answers about the future of the public service. However, I cannot deny that I am both excited and optimistic about the challenges and opportunities this ambiguity brings. Last but not least, it is also at events like these where we are able to form the bonds and connections that help us to "see the future" and "be the future" now.

Some members of the conference committee and the rest of the IPANZ New Professionals committee celebrating at the end of two action-packed days

WOMEN, TAKE THE MATTER UP

Women and work — 125 years after suffrage

New Zealand women were granted the right to vote 125 years ago thanks to suffragists like Kate Sheppard and Meri Te Tai Mangakāhia. In September, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern acknowledged the role of these two women and the 25,000 others who signed the suffrage petition. The movement, she said, was about more than just the right to vote. It was about gender equality across the board. So how have women in the public service fared since 1893? What changed in the decades after? And what goals remain unfulfilled? JACQUI GIBSON catches up with some women of the public service to find out.

Acting chief executive of Ministry for Women, Helen Pōtiki, and I are seated at a small round table in a glass-walled office on The Terrace, Wellington. I'm embarrassed. We're not long into our interview, and my pen has run out. Damn it. Not a good look.

Helen Pōtiki

Before I know it, Helen is out the door and back again with a fist full of pens, each one loaded with ink and ready to go. She's like that – a senior public servant who believes in manaatikanga and empowering others through actions big and small. On the one hand, she's clocked up more than 15 years advising the powers-that-be on issues such as gender equality and flexible work, frequently representing New Zealand on the world stage.

On the other hand, she's a career coach, mentor, and sponsor to a handful of women at different levels of central government and the non-government sector. "I see it as my professional responsibility to elevate other women," explains Helen, of Ngāti Porou, Tapuika, and Ngāi Tahu descent. "Yes, it's wonderful to rise to a chief executive position. Women are not short on talent, ability, or ambition, but a woman's path to a chief executive role is quite different from that of a man's."

Women in the public sector

Data shows that while women make up the majority (61 percent) of the country's 350,000 public sector workers, they represent 45 percent of senior management and 12 out of 29 chief executives. Women are over-represented in government administration and clerical roles (at 82 percent), while making up just 33 percent of the IT labour force.

And women, overall, within the public service earn 12.5 percent less than men, with the gender pay gap as high as 39 percent in some agencies. "I'd say most women today become leaders through hard work, grit, and by having someone in their corner who believes in them, helps them, and has their back," says Helen. "It's much less because of the systems or institutions in place."

And that's why 125 years of women's suffrage still matters. Across the road, Penny Nelson, deputy director general for Policy and Trade at the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), agrees. "We are seeing some success in government. We do have women chief executives. We have a woman prime minister. The main challenge is that this is not the norm. We're still talking about women in leadership as if it was unusual or newsworthy."

Penny Nelson

Penny, while new to her MPI job, has more than 20 years' experience in the public and private sectors. She's worked for DairyNZ, the Sustainable Business Council, and Landcare Research. Her last role was deputy secretary at the Ministry for the Environment. "Throughout my career, I've always had women leaders who developed and mentored me. I had a couple of years out of the workforce after my partner and I had our first child. When I came back to work, my manager backed and challenged me. That made a huge difference. She's been a great influence – and I aim to pay it forward in the same way."

Historic gains for women

Erin Polaczuk

From the Public Service Association (PSA) office in Wellington's CBD, national secretary Erin Polaczuk says her organisation has a proud history of making gains for women in the public sector. Founded in 1913 – a year after the public service formed – the

PSA dates back to when women could only take up shorthand and typing jobs. Once married, they were expected to resign.

Thankfully those days have long since gone. But it's been a battle, says Erin. "We've fought against the long-standing belief a woman's income was only ever supplementary to her husband's. For years, the prevailing thinking among public sector leadership was if you can buy a woman's labour for less, you should."

Equal pay

Erin says equal pay became a full-scale campaign for the PSA in the 1950s. But it took another decade before parliament passed the Government Services Equal Pay Bill to introduce equal pay to the public service. The private sector finally followed suit in 1972 with the Equal Pay Act. "Despite all this, we're still not there. Yes, it's disappointing. Pay equity was a right the suffragists pushed for back in the 1890s. But I think we're starting to see momentum build again."

A good example is the Equal Pay Amendment Bill, announced on 19 September to mark the 125th anniversary of women's suffrage. The law essentially makes it easier for women to make claims for fair and equal pay.

In July, the Minister of State Services and the Minister for Women, together with the PSA, announced a joint action plan to eliminate the public service pay gap by 2020. Agencies are now required to report on the gender pay gap within their organisations and say what they are doing to address it.

The State Services Commission has a new working group tasked with increasing flexible work conditions and leadership diversity. Training is being rolled out across the public service, recognising "unconscious bias" as one of the main barriers to closing the gender gap. Agencies are exploring the transparency and accessibility of information about pay. Remedying the negative impact of leave and caring duties on female employees is another priority.

Meanwhile, the PSA continues to pressure agencies to improve the lot of women employed at the lower grade jobs of the public sector. Negotiating for more favourable collective agreements, parental leave conditions, and leave related to tangihanga and domestic violence are just some of the PSA's more recent wins.

Office and workers, during World War II. New Zealand Free Lance: Photographic prints and negatives. Ref: 1/4-041098-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Council for Equal Pay and Opportunity: Equal pay for equal work. 1961. Ref: Eph-A-WOMEN-1961-01. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Workplace culture

Halley Wiseman is a resource consents manager who joined Wellington City Council 17 years ago. Today she manages a team of 20 city planners in a role she loves because "no day is the same" and because it gives her an opportunity to shape the city.

Halley Wiseman

Halley believes the culture of the council is changing for the better. "In the past few years, there has been a real drive from the executive leadership team to create a more inclusive and positive culture among employees, no matter who you are.

"We've refreshed our vision, values, and behaviours and set up a cross-council equality, diversity, and inclusion policy working party." In time, she'd like to think the working party will help bring about a more ethnically and gender diverse workforce. "I've sat in many meetings over the years where I've been the only female. I learned very quickly to hold my own. That's my advice to women in local government. Hold your own – you have a voice and a view that counts."

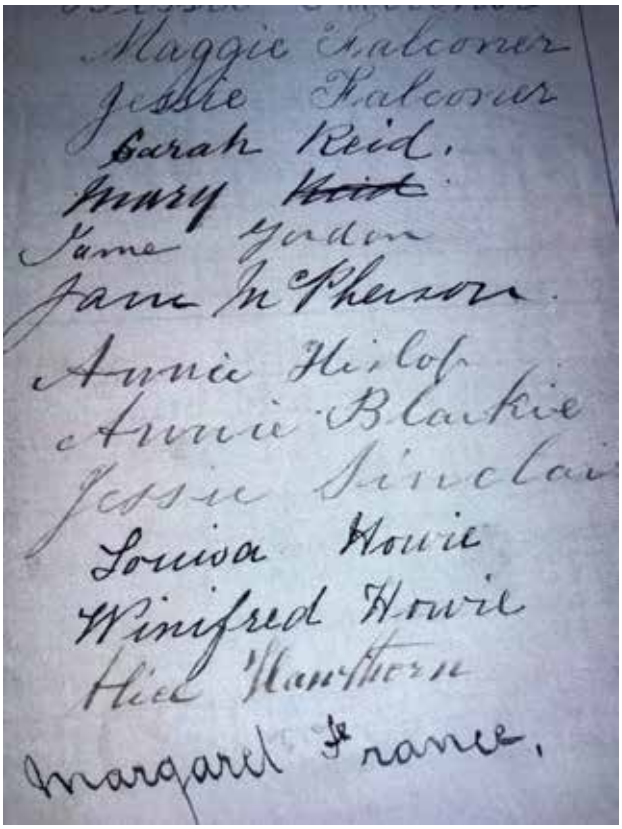
Government Women's Network

Liz Chin, from the Department of Internal Affairs, is keen to see advice like Halley's shared and practised by all women in the public sector. So in August last year, she took up a secondment as programme director for the Government Women's Network (GWN) – an all-of-government group based at the Ministry of Justice.

Liz Chin

The goal of GWN is to support women and help government agencies become better employers and improve the services they offer by allowing for greater gender diversity. As programme director, Liz acts as the link between agency networks and GWN's broader team – a nine-person governance group that includes GWN's Auckland and Southern chairs.

"I'm there for initial support and advice when networks are getting started. But it's up to each network to figure out the issues they want to tackle, how to operate, and what funding may be available."



A few of the signatures from the suffrage petition, 1893
Photo: Jacqui Gibson

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The common goal of every network is to promote the interests of women in the workplace and help members achieve their goals. So far, more than 45 networks have set up around the country, says Liz. A recent example is the Southern Government Women's Network based in Christchurch, which started in May. In June, one of the more well-established networks took out the Empowerment Award at the annual Diversity Works New Zealand Awards.

Based at the Ministry of Justice, the network has 730 members from Kaikohe to Invercargill, as well as a team of 25 volunteers who run monthly events and arrange development opportunities. It operates during work time and is strongly supported by senior management.

This year, it features a Men as Allies campaign, which aims to help men better understand the barriers women face and how to address them.

On Suffrage Day this year, MPI and ACC launched women's networks of their own. MPI newcomer Penny Nelson opened a panel discussion to mark the launch of Ngā Wāhine Toa, MPI's women's network. The launch was attended by more than 200 staff.

"It was a privilege. I'm still very new here, but from my recent experience, I couldn't have been better supported as I've come in. It's been great hearing senior leaders discuss the steps we're taking to become a more diverse and inclusive workplace. I think agency leaders understand that being more representative will help us get the most from our people, as well as grow and deliver for New Zealand communities.

Lucy Pope, Penny Nelson, and Jacqui Neave of the MPI Women's Network

"At the network launch, I loved seeing up-and-coming young women leaders take the Suffrage Day legacy forward. Naturally, we have further to go, but it's exciting to think of a more diverse public sector. And I hope we achieve that well within the next 100 years."

FLASHBACK TO 1893

> **Women vote for the first time on 28 November 1893.**

> **On polling day, 90,000 women voted (an 82 percent turnout, far higher than the registered male voter turnout).**

> **There were no female candidates to vote for (women would wait another 26 years before they could stand for election).**

> **New Zealand's first female MP, Elizabeth McCoombs, was elected 40 years later.**

> **Today, New Zealand sits at 19th in the world for the number of women MPs in parliament.**

Want to set up or join a women's network?

To set up or join a network, visit www.gwn.govt.nz or contact Liz Chin, interim programme director, at liz.chin@gwn.govt.nz

THE CUSTOMER COMES FIRST

Andrew Horwood

Being a public servant in parliament

Being a private secretary for a Minister has some unique demands and also some rewarding insights. ANDREW HORWOOD gives an insider's view of a job that takes you to the heart of government.

Any successful business will tell you the same: if you're not client focused, you won't be in business for very long. The rationale for this is obvious – if you give customers what they want, they'll keep buying your services. As well as having happy customers, you'll have happy staff who are efficient and self-aware.

But what if you're a policy adviser in the public service and your "client" is the Minister? How do you find out what the Minister wants and keep him or her happy? One way to better understand your client – particularly if you can't regularly meet them face-to-face – is to work in their office as a private secretary.

It's not uncommon for a Minister's diary to have wall-to-wall meetings from breakfast until late into the evening.

From policy advice to private secretary

A private secretary is seconded from a public service department to a Minister's office. The secretary's role is to liaise between the two. When the Minister wants advice, speech notes, or anything else from the department, she or he gets it through the private secretary. When the department provides a report or wants to send a message to the Minister, the department does it through the private secretary. The private secretary will attend almost all the Minister's meetings relevant to the portfolio.

For 18 months in 2016–17, I was Private Secretary, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, coming to the job after being a senior adviser at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. During my secondment, some unexpected things happened – John Key (not yet Sir John) resigned, Bill English (not yet Sir Simon William) reshuffled Cabinet, and the government changed after the 2017 general election. This meant I served under three Ministers of Commerce and Consumer Affairs: Paul Goldsmith, Jacqui Dean, and Kris Faafoi. Before this, I'd also acted as Private Secretary for Energy and Resources (Simon Bridges) and Associate Economic Development (Te Ururoa Flavell). In other words, I served five Ministers from three parties in three portfolios.

After many hours struggling to decipher their handwriting; sharing cars, planes, and beers; buying secret Santa gifts; going to one Minister's house for a lemon, honey, and ginger between meetings; and, you know, doing the job of a private secretary, here's what I learned.

Ministers are busy

Ministers are extremely driven people with bulging diaries, jam-packed with stakeholder meetings, caucus meetings, Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings, meetings with officials, ad-hoc meetings on issues of the day, party events, speaking engagements, time in the debating chamber, sod turnings, electorate work, travel to allow for all this, and goodness knows what else.

It's not uncommon for a Minister's diary to have wall-to-wall meetings from breakfast until late into the evening. They may have been awake for hours before a breakfast meeting if they had to fly to it. It can be a special treat for Ministers just to have a sit-down meal, to get the recommended hours of sleep, to re-caffeinate, and to properly read all the advice they receive.

In other words, departments are giving advice to very busy people. When giving advice, whether oral or written, a few principles apply. It must be:

- no longer than necessary
- in plain English
- delivered with confidence
- rational and fact-based, rather than based on intuition
- politically neutral.

As one of my parliamentary colleagues put it: "Great advice can be missed because the adviser took too long to get to the greatness." Ministers need to instantly know why they are being told something, and they need to have it set out in the most digestible form. When advising a Minister, you need to tell them what they need to know – you don't need to show how much you know.

The public service isn't the only source of advice

Some in the public sector treat the policy process like an art form, full of hallowed language and traditional procedures that revere an apolitical purity. That's fine; that's the job of a policy adviser. But when things get to the executive, it's not that simple.

Ministers need to instantly know why they are being told something, and they need to have it set out in the most digestible form.

Unlike public servants, Ministers are elected every three years. They do, and should, worry about what voters think. Elections are the ultimate

check on parliament. So when making decisions, Ministers will consider not only departmental advice but also the views of the stakeholders they've met, the journalists who've interviewed and written about them, their coalition partners, and their colleagues within their parties. They also need to consider opportunity costs in a way most officials don't. For example, if an initiative requires new funding, Ministers need to weigh it up against other uses for the money – something officials may know nothing about.

All of these extra influences soak up precious ministerial time. They reinforce the need for public service policy advice to be succinct, confident, well-written, and well-presented.

Every private secretary role is different because every ministerial office is different

If you're considering a private secretary role, there are a few things you might want to think about. Private secretary roles vary depending on the Minister's preferences, the context they're operating in, the way the office is run and resourced, and the demands of the portfolio.

They reinforce the need for public service policy advice to be succinct, confident, well-written, and well-presented.

Ministers' preferences vary dramatically. Some Ministers rely on their political advisers and political instincts more than others. Some Ministers like to consult with their colleagues before doing anything. Some particularly hate jargon: one Minister would (light-heartedly) berate officials for using words like "learnings".

Similarly, a private secretary will be more effective if he or she can give the department a sense of the context that the Minister is operating in. The private secretary should be able to relay the conversations the Minister has had with stakeholders, the views of the political advisers, the murmurings of parliamentary colleagues, and anything else they can pick up that can help the department understand what its client is thinking and hearing.

Ministerial offices will be staffed depending on the Minister's portfolio demands and their level of seniority. Role allocation and systems will differ between offices. To serve their client, a private secretary needs to quickly adopt the practices of the office and adapt if these change. It may be appropriate to relay office procedures to the department if this will help them provide better advice.

Every portfolio has different demands. For example, Commerce and Consumer Affairs involved dozens of Cabinet papers every year, reflecting the ministerial portfolio responsibilities for legislation, a broad suite of policy areas, and numerous board appointments. In contrast, Small Business entailed a demanding travel schedule covering all parts of the country, but had a comparatively small parliamentary workload. You need to understand these differences if you want to work in the area.

Trust is key

I always thought of the private secretary role as having two components. The "secretary" component is the administrative part of it. The "private" component is about being a dependable adviser and confidante for the Minister, the Minister's advisers, and the department.

To be good at the private component, you need to be trusted: the Minister needs to know you have their back. This isn't about managing political risks, it's about the Minister being confident you're doing your job properly, relaying their messages accurately, and scrutinising advice to make sure it's fit-for-purpose.

A great job when done effectively

The private secretary has an important job in servicing the Minister as a client. But one of the best ways they can do this is to provide the department with the information it needs to be able to tailor its advice most effectively. That's where the private secretary makes a real difference.

To be good at the private component, you need to be trusted: the Minister needs to know you have their back.

If you're thinking about doing the job, I can't tell you whether you'll enjoy it. I can tell you what to think about though, so you can make that decision for yourself. You need to consider the style of the Minister and their staff, the way the office is run, your rapport with the officials you'd work with, the nature of the portfolio, the opportunity cost of the hours you'll work, and any other variables that determine the exact nature of the job you'll do. You also need to consider whether your personality suits this kind of client servicing.

Finally, I want to thank the excellent officials I worked with while in parliament.

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