



9 April 2025

Tēnā koe

**Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 12 March 2025, where you follow up on a request for papers relating to Social Cohesion.

You have also asked for the status of the following reports:

- Social Cohesion Community Research Stocktake Report
- Community Insights on Social Cohesion: A Narrative Report
- A proposal for the review of the Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Measurement Framework and subsequent update of the Social Cohesion Baseline Report.

Please refer to **Appendix One** which provides the current status of each of these reports.

Please refer to **Appendix Two** which provides a copy of the following reports:

- Social Cohesion Community Research Stocktake Report
- Community Insights from the Social Cohesion Fund: A Narrative Report.

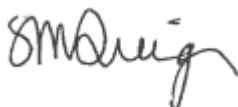
Some information has been withheld as out of scope of your request.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**

### Appendix One

Report title	Current status
Social Cohesion Community Research Stocktake Report	These reports are ready and can be considered for release to individuals that request access to them.
Community Insights on Social Cohesion: A Narrative Report	
A proposal for the review of the Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Measurement Framework and subsequent update of the Social Cohesion Baseline Report	<p>There is no proposal for the review of the Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Measurement Framework at this stage.</p> <p>The Social Cohesion Baseline Report is in the process of being updated. It is expected the report will be ready before June 2025.</p>

# Social Cohesion Community Research Stocktake Report



May 2024



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Report Structure</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Part One: Background to the Community Research Stocktake</b>	<b>8</b>
• A baseline report identified data gaps in measuring outcome areas within the Measurement Framework	8
• Community engagements identified two community research projects to address measurement gaps	9
• Report purpose	9
• We analysed community research and Master's and PhD abstracts to identify themes in priority outcome areas	10
• Limitations to research	11
<b>Part Two: Initial themes from Community Research Stocktake</b>	<b>12</b>
• Priority outcome areas are interconnected	12
• Community groups face distinct issues	12
<b>Enablers</b>	<b>12</b>
• Supportive networks help participation and trust within and across communities	12
• Safe and supportive environments for participation have many benefits for communities	13
• "Here in New Zealand, I feel more comfortable trusting people"	13
• Honest dialogue about identity and belonging generates hope within communities	13
• Participation in mega sporting events and event tourism has various benefits for communities	13
• Using heterogenous ethnicity categories helps with minority recognition	14
• Preserving heritage languages has multiple benefits for communities	14
• Museums are trusted civic spaces that foster participation and collaboration	14
• Characteristics of housing, neighbourhood, and location impact communities' wellbeing	14
<b>Barriers</b>	<b>15</b>
• Some national structures had impacted social inclusion within communities	15
• Aspects of the education system fail to meet the needs of communities	16
• Challenges to maintaining heritage language cause ambivalence regarding people's sense of identity and social capital	16
• Discrimination and racism negatively impact communities' wellbeing and participation	16
• Safety concerns restrict people's participation in society, and impact their health	17
• Employment challenges faced by migrants impact their participation and contribution to communities	17

• Inappropriate resettlement support services reduce the wellbeing and inclusiveness of communities	18
• Digital exclusion exacerbates social isolation and has negative effects on communities' wellbeing	18
• Limited social connections may lead people to participate in gambling communities	18
• Major national, sporting, or social events do not necessarily encourage participation among communities	19
• Migrants often distrust unstable social institutions functioning within ethnic communities	19
• Migration-related challenges cause feelings of exhaustion, loneliness, and emotional isolation for these communities	19
• Communities' underrepresentation in decision-making organisations impacts their trust in institutions	20
• Unconscious bias in decision-making has harmful impacts on trust and respect within communities	20
• New developments within small towns can disregard community values and their sense of identity	20
<b>Suggestions from community and academic research</b>	<b>21</b>
• Making both minority and majority groups responsible for social integration will improve social cohesion	21
• Culturally appropriate support services improve wellbeing and inclusiveness in society	21
• Programmes that promote family relationships reduce social isolation	21
• Heritage language maintenance benefits sense of identity and social cohesion	22
• Equitable digital access enhances community participation and connection	22
• Local governments' involvement in communities improves social cohesion	22
• Mixed-use collective housing facilitates community and social cohesion	22
• Valuing indigenous knowledge has benefits for wider community	23
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>24</b>
• At present, community data does not adequately address measurement gaps, but does contain insights for the review of the Measurement Framework	24
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix A: List of 14 community organisations</b>	<b>27</b>

# Executive Summary

The Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Strategic Framework (the Strategic Framework), released in October 2022, outlines actions and outcomes aimed at working towards a central vision of social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand. It was developed in response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019. Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Measurement Framework (the Measurement Framework) was also developed to track and measure progress towards social cohesion and to help communities articulate their own contributions to social cohesion.

Using the Measurement Framework, the Baseline Indicators Report was written which highlighted several data gaps in MSD's ability to measure the social cohesion outcome areas. A project, scoping options for addressing the gaps, identified several options, including this report which presents a stocktake and analysis of social cohesion research undertaken by community-led organisations and academia over the past two decades.

We reviewed the websites of community groups and collected insights from Master's and PhD thesis abstracts. In the time available, we reviewed abstracts rather than a comprehensive analysis of the theses. We were also unable to analyse material from other sources, such as radio shows and interviews found on ethnic community websites.

## Findings

The stocktake report highlighted how communities experience and interpret the interconnectedness of the priority outcome areas of recognition and respect, trust, and participation. Moreover, every community organisation faces distinct issues that could be better understood with more investigation and research. Understanding and addressing the respective community sub-groups' distinct experiences should remain central to any discussion related to social cohesion. It also identified enablers, barriers, and recommended actions related to social cohesion priority outcome areas.

## Enablers

The research reviewed made the following observations about enablers and activities that have proven influential in strengthening social cohesion in communities:

- Supportive programmes and networks provided by community organisations prevented and/or reduced the impact of loneliness and isolation in communities.
- Safe and supportive environments benefited people due to their ability to promote volunteering, physical activity, healthy eating, learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and retaining their cultural identity.
- Generalised trust among immigrants can be developed through their sense of safety when interacting with social institutions.
- Honest dialogue about identity and belonging generates hope within communities.
- Active participation in mega sporting events can bring significant advantages to communities, including sense of identity, multicultural appreciation, and connection to the country.

- Using heterogeneous ethnicity categories helps with minority recognition.
- Preserving heritage languages and acknowledging other languages and cultures can make social cohesion stronger in New Zealand.
- Museums are trusted civic spaces with capabilities to connect knowledge to the public and policymakers, fostering participation and collaboration.
- Characteristics of housing, neighbourhood, and location impact communities' wellbeing.

## **Barriers**

These were found in the research regarding the activities and ideas that could reduce or have negative impacts on social cohesion:

- Community groups encountered systemic disparities in achieving employment, financial stability, health, crime rates, and fair outcomes.
- Aspects of the education system fail to support intersectional identities.
- Challenges to maintaining heritage language cause ambivalence regarding people's sense of identity and social capital.
- Discrimination and racism, including sexism and hate speech and attacks on both individuals and groups, negatively impact communities' wellbeing and participation.
- Safety concerns restrict people's participation in society and impact their health.
- Employment pathways, suitable employment options for the skills refugees have, and limited knowledge about employment entitlements are critical obstacles affecting their settlement.
- Inappropriate resettlement support services, such as lack of cultural and linguistic competency of mainstream agencies/services, reduce the wellbeing and inclusiveness of communities.
- Lack of access to technology, unreliable internet connection, and limited digital literacy can impede people's ability to navigate systems and processes critical for engagements and resettlement.
- Limited societal connections leave individuals with fewer alternatives for socialising, leading some to participate in gambling communities.
- Migration-related challenges cause feelings of exhaustion, loneliness, and emotional isolation for some communities.
- Communities' underrepresentation in decision-making organisations impacts their trust in institutions.
- Unconscious bias in decision-making has harmful impacts on trust and respect within communities.
- New developments within small towns can disregard community values and their sense of identity.

### **Suggestions from community and academic research**

The suggestions and ideas presented here are from community research and Master's and PhD thesis abstracts that address issues and barriers related to social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- Making both minority and majority groups responsible for social integration will improve social cohesion.
- Investing in culturally appropriate services for different ethnic communities and minority groups would contribute to more positive wellbeing outcomes and help improve inclusiveness in society.
- Preventive education and programmes that promote family relationships reduce social isolation.
- Funding, facilities and other support could assist families and young children to maintain their heritage languages which would strengthen their sense of identity and social cohesion.
- Equitable digital access enhances community participation and connection.
- Local governments' proactive involvement in communities improves social cohesion.
- More inclusive, socially adaptable, needs-oriented housing has the potential to facilitate community and social cohesion, reduce social isolation, and encourage diversity and inclusion.
- The validation and appreciation of indigenous knowledge, along with the preservation of Māori practices can yield significant benefits to the wider community.

These findings will inform a review of the Measurement Framework to be completed in 2024.



# Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Social Development's Research and Evaluation team extends heartfelt appreciation to the ethnic communities and organisations who participated in workshops to help develop options to address priority gaps in the Measurement Framework. We also wish to acknowledge their contribution to this report through their research, insights, and diverse undertakings within their respective communities to support social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand. Furthermore, we would like to convey our gratitude to the authors of the Master's and PhD theses that have been referenced in this report. Their rigorous studies have been instrumental in deepening our comprehension of the intricate facets of social cohesion.

## Disclaimer

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the researchers, and are not the official position of the Ministry of Social Development.

## Report Structure

This report has two parts and one appendix. **Part One** provides a background to this work, a summary of the social cohesion reports in scope, gaps identified in the Baseline Indicator Report, report purpose, the methodology used to present the findings, and the limitations of this stocktake report. **Part Two** presents the enablers, barriers, and suggestions for improving social cohesion found in community and academic research in relation to the priority outcome areas of recognition and respect, trust and participations.

**Appendix A** includes the list of 14 ethnic and faith-based communities whose research and insights have been used in this report.

# Part One: Background to the Community Research Stocktake

Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Strategic Framework was released in October 2022 by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The Strategic Framework outlines actions and outcomes aimed at working towards a central vision of social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand. It was developed in response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019.

The Measurement Framework is included as part of the Strategic Framework. The purpose of the Measurement Framework is to track and measure progress towards social cohesion and to help communities articulate their own contributions to social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand. The development of the Measurement Framework was informed by engagement with diverse communities across the country as well as relevant social cohesion research literature, including the Social Inclusion in New Zealand Rapid Evidence Review (2020), and the Measurement of Social Connectedness and its Relationship with Wellbeing (2018).

## A baseline report identified data gaps in measuring outcome areas within the Measurement Framework

A Baseline Indicators Report was developed using the Measurement Framework and highlighted several gaps in MSD's ability to measure the social cohesion outcome areas. In November 2022, the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities indicated their preference to prioritise measurement work to address the following data gaps in the three outcome areas of recognition and respect, trust, and participation.

### Priority measurement gaps

The table below outlines the priority outcome areas and indicators identified in the Baseline Indicators Report for which we lack a data source and were unable to measure.

Priority outcome area	What we were unable to measure
People, families, whānau and communities are RECOGNISED for who they are and RESPECT others	1. Indicators for <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Willingness to engage with others</li><li>• Perception that people can disagree respectfully</li></ul> Understanding differences across population sub-groups
People, families, whānau and communities TRUST each other and institutions	2. Indicators for <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perception of representation</li><li>• Perception of fair treatment</li></ul> Understanding differences across population sub-groups
People, families, whānau and communities are willing and able to PARTICIPATE	3. Understanding differences across population sub-groups

## **Community engagements identified two community research projects to address measurement gaps**

As part of a project scoping options for addressing the data gaps in the Measurement Framework, MSD facilitated four workshops in May 2023 with ethnic community groups across Aotearoa New Zealand. We identified several options to address measurement gaps in the priority outcome areas, including using research undertaken by respective community groups on social cohesion and related themes.

Following these community engagements, in May 2023, MSD recommended to the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion, and Ethnic Communities that we could help address data gaps in the priority outcome areas across population sub-groups by undertaking some community research. As such, MSD committed to undertaking:

- A stocktake and analysis of ethnic and faith-based community-led research from a social cohesion measurement lens
- Collection of insights from a range of community groups funded by the \$2 million Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion community fund.

This report explores the insights learnt through the stocktake exercise.

### **Report purpose**

This report presents a stocktake and analysis of social cohesion research undertaken by community-led organisations and academia over the past two decades. During four engagement hui with community organisations, participants expressed concern that their respective research was underutilised. Where possible, we have attempted to address this concern by capturing insights on the priority outcome areas of recognition and respect, trust, and participation within the Measurement Framework, through the experiences of community sub-groups who have made Aotearoa New Zealand their home. It is important to note that these priority outcome areas were identified through the development of the Baseline Indicators Report.

This report does not address all the 15 identified data measurement gaps, except for those related to three priority areas, including willingness to engage with others, perception that people can disagree respectfully, perception of representation, perception of fair treatment, and understanding differences across population sub-groups.

## **We analysed community research and Master's and PhD abstracts to identify themes in priority outcome areas**

We reached out to 14 community groups (Appendix A) who had participated in the community engagements, inviting them to share any community-led research on social cohesion conducted by their organisation. In our communications, we outlined the significance of their research in enhancing our understanding of the differences and experiences across the social cohesion priority outcome areas.

We invited their contributions to the stocktake through any of the following inputs:

- A short summary of their findings from research carried out in the last five years,
- A sample of anonymised raw research data that had not yet been analysed.

From this invitation, one community group provided research reports, while another shared a list of related research published on their website.

Following this, we reviewed the websites of the 14 community groups, searching for any research or resources generated by them that could be included in our stocktake. We found different resources including literature reviews, research papers, studies, public education resource kits, interviews, reports, surveys, and submissions.

These resources were searched for their relevance to the priority outcome areas and then collated into themes in an Excel spreadsheet. The majority of insights relevant to this work come from Inclusive Aotearoa (IA), Association of Latin American Communities Inc (ALAC), Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ), Asian Family Services (AFC), Belong Aotearoa (BA), and African Communities Forum Incorporate (ACOFI).

For insights from Master's and PhD theses, we sought abstracts through a search of the NZResearch database (NZResearch.org.nz) using the key terms 'social cohesion' + 'in New Zealand,' and chose the options 'thesis', '2000-2023', 'all institutions', 'all license', which resulted in 20 abstracts. An initial search without the term 'New Zealand' yielded 84 abstracts, but we decided to keep our focus on New Zealand-based research. We then reviewed the abstracts from the perspective of the three priority outcome areas and collated the data in an Excel spreadsheet.

To reference the research from communities' websites, the following abbreviations have been used to acknowledge the source of the insights:

- IA: Inclusive Aotearoa
- ALAC: Association of Latin American Communities Inc
- IWCNZ: Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand
- AFS: Asian Family Services
- BA: Belong Aotearoa.
- ACOFI: African Communities Forum Incorporate

Where relevant, insights from research conducted by community groups will be distinguished from academic research insights obtained from the Master's and PhD abstracts.

## Limitations to research

To ensure the completion of this stocktake within available resources before October 2023, we limited the scope to reviewing available research from the 14 community groups that had previously participated in community engagements and incorporating Master's and PhD thesis abstracts found in the NZResearch database. Due to time constraints, we only reviewed abstracts rather than a comprehensive analysis of the theses.

Furthermore, material from other sources, such as radio shows and interviews found on ethnic community websites were out of scope. Given the abundance of these types of insights, conducting a thorough review would have required substantial resourcing.

While the community and academic research did incorporate insights from Māori and Pacific communities, their primary focus was on migrants from other parts of the world including refugees, minorities, and diverse ethnic communities. Where appropriate, we have included insights from Māori and Pacific groups relevant to the priority outcome areas.

The quality and methodology of the community-led research were sometimes unknown, and readers should consider that these studies may not have undergone the same peer review processes required for academic research, including Master's and PhD theses.

# Part Two: Initial themes from Community Research Stocktake

The stocktake identified enablers, barriers, and suggested actions in the community research and Master's and PhD abstracts related to social cohesion priority outcome areas. Enablers include activities that have proven influential in strengthening social cohesion in communities. Barriers list the themes that could reduce or have negative impacts on social cohesion. Suggested actions include options that can address issues and barriers related to enhancing social cohesion and strengthen it in Aotearoa New Zealand. Additionally, two overall findings have been highlighted by the stocktake as follows:

## **Priority outcome areas are interconnected**

The stocktake highlighted the interconnectedness of the priority outcome areas of recognition and respect, trust, and participation. While community organisations had not specifically focused on these outcome areas in their research, they had explored related concepts, such as a sense of belonging. Across each of the priority outcome areas, themes were identified with respect to enablers, barriers, and suggested actions. It is important to note that this categorisation is not exhaustive, and some themes are interconnected and could potentially fit into multiple categories.

## **Community groups face distinct issues**

The stocktake also showed that every community organisation faces distinct issues and inquiries that require investigation and research. Understanding and addressing the respective community sub-groups' distinct experiences should remain central to any discussion related to social cohesion.

## **Enablers**

### **Supportive networks help participation and trust within and across communities**

Most communities indicated the importance of supportive networks as an enabler of participation and trust in their communities. Supportive networks, such as ethnic communities and NGOs, can provide support when people are marginalised and isolated. Where there were supportive families/whānau and networks, people felt included (IA). Asian women reported that family-oriented support assisted their access to health services, such as perinatal care, and thereby improved their trust and confidence in health professionals (AFS). It was also reported that supportive programmes provided by community organisations prevented and/or reduced the impact of loneliness and isolation for women and provided a valuable sense of community for former refugee and migrant women (BA).

## **Safe and supportive environments for participation have many benefits for communities**

The provision of a safe and supportive environment was an important enabler for participation and trust for communities. For instance, refugee and migrant women were able to learn and practice their English, have a sense of community, and connect with their culture safely. Communities reported that safe and supportive environments provided people with pathways to employment through upskilling and training. Safe environments have been noted as beneficial for people due to their ability to promote volunteering, physical activity, healthy eating, learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and retaining their own cultural identity (BA).

### **"Here in New Zealand, I feel more comfortable trusting people"**

Lynne Soon-Chean Park's doctoral thesis (2020), which explores causes of trust among Koreans living in Auckland, argues that generalised trust among immigrants can be developed by their sense of safety based on their social interactions in Aotearoa New Zealand. It has been observed that the inherent social structures are characterised by openness, supportiveness, a relaxed atmosphere, and fairness, factors that contribute to the formation of a positively expressed generalised trust within the immigrant population (Park, 2020).

## **Honest dialogue about identity and belonging generates hope within communities**

There is a willingness among people to participate in honest conversations about identity and a sense of belonging for all New Zealanders, regardless of their differences. This openness fosters hope within communities. For instance, following the 2019 Christchurch terror attacks, there was a noticeable change in everyday interactions among diverse groups (IA). A community research noted that the response from people and the shift in some attitudes generated hope within communities including greater willingness to participate in honest conversations and share their experiences (IA).

## **Participation in mega sporting events and event tourism has various benefits for communities**

Event tourism was found to be a valuable means of enhancing social cohesion while also delivering economic advantages to communities. For example, McNaughton (2012) revealed that in Lawrence, Otago, an anniversary festival not only brought about economic benefits but also contributed to the development of social cohesion within the community. Moreover, their research acknowledged that active participation in mega sporting events can bring significant advantages to communities (McNaughton, 2012). Lau (2015) also noted that engaging in such activities has the potential to generate a wide range of positive effects, including boosting one's sense of identity and pride, enhancing multicultural appreciation, strengthening connections to the country, leading to favourable recommendations for the country, and fostering business engagement.

## **Using heterogenous ethnicity categories helps with minority recognition**

Nachowitz (2015) found that how people identify with their ethnicity and ongoing discrimination plays an important role in how communities are recognised and respected. For example, Indian participants from various origins, in a study examining the use of predominant ethnic categories, expressed a preference for more nuanced terms that go beyond merely identifying as Indian in the census. They favoured hyphenated nationality or ethnicity terms (e.g., Kiwi-Indian, Indo-Fijian) as well as identifiers related to their region, religion, language, or country of birth, considering these to be important means of self-identification (Nachowitz, 2015).

Nachowitz (2015) also argues that Aotearoa New Zealand's past colonial society had made it difficult to notice or recognise the early Indian presence in New Zealand. This pattern continues due to the ongoing use of broad ethnic categories in Aotearoa New Zealand's census history, which mask the depth of ethnic minority diversification within communities.

## **Preserving heritage languages has multiple benefits for communities**

Findings from both community groups and academic sources indicate people share positive attitudes towards their heritage language. Ethnic groups associate their languages and multilingualism to the concepts of identity, family cohesion, cognitive processes, academic achievement, economic prosperity, and related cultural benefits. Connelly (2022) reported that parents can engage in communicative strategies to support their children's heritage language acquisition through conversations in personal spaces such as dwellings, and through engaging in literature and media in respective languages. Community groups noted that having shared environments that enable the use of heritage language would be beneficial, especially for new migrants and refugees (IA, BA). Community research has also noted acknowledging and respecting other languages and cultures can make social cohesion stronger in New Zealand.

## **Museums are trusted civic spaces that foster participation and collaboration**

Museums are regarded as trusted civic spaces with distinctive capabilities to connect knowledge to the public and policymakers, fostering participation and collaboration. According to Knowles (2022), museums promote engagement and cooperation and are recognised as intermediaries between civil society and government due to their inclusive and accessible nature. Furthermore, museums are acknowledged as institutions of great trustworthiness, providing community spaces where people can engage in learning, discussions, and deliberations.

## **Characteristics of housing, neighbourhood, and location impact communities' wellbeing**

In a study on housing and wellbeing, Fisk (2007) found that older adults' mental and physical well-being is influenced by their satisfaction with housing and neighbourhood factors like social cohesion, accessibility, and safety. These factors also affect their trust and participation within their communities. Additionally, it has been observed that neighbourhoods with high levels of social cohesion and youth membership in community organisations increase the wellbeing of adolescents (Aminzadeh, 2012).



The connection between location and cultural identity was also highlighted as a significant factor by community sub-groups and academic research. As an example, among Māori, Nikora (2007) emphasised the tangible aspects of a marae and its surroundings and symbolism in bringing together hapū and iwi for social gatherings, important cultural events, and relationship building. Nikora's research indicates that Māori individuals in Aotearoa New Zealand continue to place value on and find significance and contentment within their cultural communities, along with the social identities linked to these communities.

Chapman-Carr (2020) explores the impacts of community leadership and management in shaping a physical location for use by its members. Using a case study of Randwick Park in Manurewa, Auckland, Chapman-Carr demonstrated how giving communities the ownership and management of their local parks led to positive community outcomes that contributed to overall community wellbeing. The research showed that the assumed de facto ownership of their local park shaped it into a place the community love and thereby instilled pride among its members (Chapman-Carr, 2020).

The link between play and landscape architecture was also identified as a crucial catalyst capable of mitigating social fragmentation among ethnic communities, and thereby improving social cohesion and resilience (Webber, 2020). In a research on urban environments such as the suburbs of Newtown and Berhampore, Wellington, Webber (2020) showcased how landscape architecture can engage with the concept of play to reignite passion within a community and support social network growth. It was noted that play can facilitate new forms of social interaction, improve sense of community and familiarity and that playfulness can increase overall resilience and mitigate effects of social fragmentation.

## **Barriers**

### **Some national structures had impacted social inclusion within communities**

Many community groups reported that they encountered systemic disparities in achieving employment, financial stability, health, crime rates, and fair outcomes (IA). There has been consistent observation that national systems in Aotearoa New Zealand are firmly entrenched in colonial, patriarchal ideologies, which have hindered substantial progress. Additionally, it has been observed that previous policy initiatives have had limited effect in bringing about significant transformation in the broader social inclusion of diverse communities (IA). It further argues that social structures have been designed in a way that has favoured certain demographic groups for an extended period, to the extent that the outcomes of the system might seem unintentional but are, in fact, deeply rooted in discriminatory practices and beliefs (AFS).

## **Aspects of the education system fail to meet the needs of communities**

Community findings indicate that the education system in Aotearoa New Zealand is situated in traditional norms and ideologies likely influenced by colonialism, and heteronormative ideologies. Therefore, it fails to appropriately support intersectional identities, hindering its ability to address the diverse needs of communities. It was noted that these ideologies actively marginalise people who are perceived as different (IA). Community research also identified a lack of sufficient efforts in public education in relation to the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand, including gender diversity. There is a recognised need for education to play a key role in fostering an inclusive and participatory society. It was noted that the education system falls short of reflecting different nations and does not help the young to understand the origins of where others have come from (ACOFI). Additionally, migrant parents reported having a collective cultural approach at home, while schools tend to emphasise an individual approach. Children from migrant families face challenges in navigating both worlds, and without parents or teachers' acknowledgment or understanding, it may lead to feelings of isolation (AFS).

## **Challenges to maintaining heritage language cause ambivalence regarding people's sense of identity and social capital**

Barriers around the marginalised position of heritage languages was identified for families seeking to maintain their languages. It was observed that even though children tend to adopt their parents' favourable language beliefs, there are mixed feelings concerning their sense of identity, and the perceived social and academic value of their heritage language (Connelly, 2022). Community research also emphasised the unavailability of formal heritage language education, which makes it the family's responsibility to maintain their language. This expectation can remain unfulfilled due to challenges such as limited funding, facilities, and resources to support language acquisition and maintenance. It has been noted that many former refugees and migrant women don't have the ability to communicate in English which creates challenges for settlement and a sense of belonging (BA).

## **Discrimination and racism negatively impact communities' wellbeing and participation**

Most community research shows that discrimination does not only occur from dominant to minority groups in Aotearoa New Zealand, but it can also occur between and within communities, such as particular religious or ethnic groups (IA). The rainbow community have also noted discriminatory views toward their communities. The effect is not only stigmatising, but also influences wellbeing and their ability to participate fully and freely in society (IA). Some communities have expressed their concerns about the widespread intimidation, bullying, and instances of violence in specific areas (ALAC). Community research showed that racism, sexism, and hate speech and attacks on both individuals and groups from a wide range of minority communities have been increasing (IA).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, community groups reported the spike in micro-aggressions towards migrants and racially motivated attacks, especially targeting ethnic minorities from Asian backgrounds (BA). It was also noted that racism has been re-routed virtually through diverse social media platforms, magnifying deep-seated intolerance and divisiveness that counters social cohesion (BA). Many migrants reported experiencing racism in their search for work. They experienced racism from recruitment agencies and potential employers implying they would be 'taking jobs' from New Zealanders. As a result, most of them had low self-confidence resulting in social isolation, and poor mental health (BA).

### **Safety concerns restrict people's participation in society, and impact their health**

Community groups have pointed out concerns about safety associated with the possibility of verbal or physical harm, in particular, affecting women, the rainbow community, as well as ethnic and disabled communities, hindering their ability to participate in society as well as having adverse effects on their health and wellbeing (IA). Certain communities have voiced their concern regarding the wellbeing of families and neighbourhoods in some social housing areas where criminal activities are high, and individuals are more prone to be exposed to violence. This type of environment impacts the ability of people to actively get involved and participate in their community to foster better inclusion (ALAC).

### **Employment challenges faced by migrants impact their participation and contribution to communities**

Community research stated that employment pathways, lack of suitable employment options for the skills that refugees have, and limited knowledge about employment entitlements are critical obstacles affecting their settlement (ALAC). Some respondents expressed wanting to leave Aotearoa New Zealand and re-migrating to another country (BA). Other migrants showed aspirations around reskilling and gaining new skills to enhance their chances of keeping existing jobs, moving into new roles, and/or preventing job losses. Community research also referred to a lack of acknowledgement and recognition of students' contribution and participation in work settings, in circumstances where they often work overtime without compensation and get verbally abused by employers. These experiences result in impacted communities experiencing low morale, rendering them vulnerable to engaging in illegal employment (with potential for exploitation), and exposing them to unfair treatment and workplace bullying (AFS). The findings also suggest that lack of employment opportunities can lead individuals to seek support within gambling communities as a substitute for earning a living (AFS).

Some community subgroups like Muslim women felt stigma against them within employment settings (IA). They faced challenges in finding jobs because they were deemed 'overqualified' and/or faced difficulties because they wore the hijab. The lack of recognition and respect for their skills and contributions have led to a deficit in trust, particularly in institutions and their policies which, in turn, affects their level of participation in communities (IWCNZ).

## **Inappropriate resettlement support services reduce the wellbeing and inclusiveness of communities**

Community research reported that the resettlement agencies are falling short in addressing the needs of immigrant families, leading to an erosion of trust in institutions (ALAC). The absence of support hampers the integration of immigrants into local communities, as they are not provided with sufficient assistance to form independent associations for cultural self-management and advocacy. Research showed immigrants' dissatisfaction with the professionalism of interpreters during the resettlement process which affected their ability to access mental health and other services in their area and resulted in them being unaware of their rights as patients and citizens (ALAC). Mainstream agencies/services were criticised for their general lack of cultural and linguistic competency. This was identified as a systemic issue that requires somewhat urgent change (BA). It was noted that Asian and ethnic minority women, including sole parents, those with disabilities, and sex workers, face unique challenges in accessing healthcare and social support, which can negatively impact their health outcomes (AFS).

Many new migrants and refugees do not have familial support systems available when first arriving here. For example, Asian women's cultural backgrounds can make it challenging for them to ask for help from outside of the family (AFS). It was noted that support is even more restricted for non-resident migrants, including international students (BA). Inappropriate resettlement support services can reduce the wellbeing and inclusiveness of communities and thereby hinder their ability to participate and potentially impact their sense of belonging.

## **Digital exclusion exacerbates social isolation and has negative effects on communities' wellbeing**

The lack of access to technology, an unreliable internet connection, and limited digital literacy can impede people's ability to navigate systems and processes critical for resettlement and other important engagements, which has flow-on effects for their wellbeing. As demonstrated during COVID-19, disconnection from the internet and technology was a barrier to participation and connection and further exacerbated social isolation (Tuitama, 2020). For example, Pacific parents noted that inability to use digital technology created a disconnection with their children. This resulted in being unable to supervise their children's internet presence due to both a lack of access and an understanding of technology and the skills needed to use digital devices (Tuitama, 2020).

## **Limited social connections may lead people to participate in gambling**

Community research identified that limited societal connections leave individuals with fewer alternatives for socialising, leading some to participate in gambling communities where they meet like-minded people, despite the negative consequences experienced (AFS). There is evidence that migrant and international students of Asian backgrounds are at high risk of gambling relapses because they are likely to have limited social networks and could have used gambling as an escape from their personal problems or negative emotions such as loneliness, boredom, or stress (AFS).

It was also reported that younger gamblers (18-29 years) are more likely to experience harm around relationship conflicts, a loss of social connection and isolation, facing online crime, and a loss of credibility among social networks (AFS). Community research also suggests that recent immigrants may view gambling as an integral aspect of 'kiwi culture' because of its easy availability, widespread presence, and legal status, which could impact their willingness to participate in and connect with others (AFS).

### **Major national, sporting, or social events do not necessarily encourage participation among communities**

The perception that national events such as sports and/or other national events of significance will automatically result in increased participation and improved social cohesion has been met with scepticism in research. Community research reported that the host community of major events may often not include some ethnic communities and other sub-groups in the planning and delivery of such events and therefore exclude their participation and inclusion (Lau, 2015).

### **Migrants often distrust unstable social institutions functioning within ethnic communities**

Immigrants often encounter challenges when attempting to place trust in institutions that operate within ethnic communities. For example, the social structures within the Korean community, which have been described as unstable, heterogeneous, close-knit, and unfair, do not enable trust from community members. These characteristics significantly impact co-ethnic trust levels and the level of participation from the Korean community within Aotearoa New Zealand (Park, 2020).

### **Migration-related challenges cause feelings of exhaustion, loneliness, and emotional isolation for these communities**

Recent migrants to Aotearoa New Zealand had a greater likelihood of being lonely than most other immigrants and Asian people, experiencing higher incidences of prolonged loneliness (AFS). During and post pandemic, migrants faced challenges to belong and participate at a time of heightened uncertainty and thereby made some immigrants more susceptible to exploitation and other negative outcomes (BA).

Community research revealed that elderly Asian migrants frequently experienced high levels of isolation and feelings of loneliness, with the majority either residing by themselves or with only their spouses (AFS). Compared with women from more individualist cultural backgrounds, Asian women feel a greater deal of responsibility for their children, and they often put their children and husbands' needs before themselves, impacting their ability to participate meaningfully within and outside their communities (AFS).

## **Communities' underrepresentation in decision-making organisations impacts their trust in institutions**

Some communities in New Zealand harbour distrust in institutional bodies, primarily stemming from inadequate community representation. For example, Asian New Zealanders continue to have limited representation in Parliament, accounting for only 5 percent of MPs in 2020, having increased slightly to just under 7 percent after the 2023 elections while being approximately 15 percent of the population. Similarly, when it comes to appointments to government bodies involved in inquiries, there is often insufficient representation of Asian and ethnic minority groups, even though there are many highly qualified ethnic professionals with extensive knowledge and experience who could contribute to achieving a fair outcome for all New Zealanders (AFS). Participation in decision-making processes was recognised as a key factor in fostering trust and recognition within communities. Providing opportunities for participation in policy decisions was seen as a means for ensuring that policies acknowledge and effectively respond to the needs of ethnic and faith-based communities.

## **Unconscious bias in decision-making has harmful impacts on trust and respect within communities**

Community research suggests that unconscious bias could potentially influence decision-making, especially when socially dominant groups harbour implicit biases or prejudices against minority groups, and when individuals show a preference for those belonging to their own ethnic communities and sub-groups (AFS). It has been reported that decisions made where unconscious bias may have played a part, had damaged trust and respect and potentially impacted the positive outcomes expected of those decisions. Community participation suffers as a result. Community research also shows that policymakers and public sector largely ignore the ongoing racism and social exclusion experienced by the Asian and ethnic minority groups within workplaces and other related environments (AFS).

## **New developments within small towns can disregard community values and their sense of identity**

One key barrier mentioned in research was the negative trend in the way small Aotearoa New Zealand towns are developing, ignoring community values and a sense of identity. Lambert (2019), in a thesis on negative trends in the way small towns are developing, argues that coastal and rural settlements in Aotearoa New Zealand are experiencing growth and transformation to accommodate expansion, often at the expense of preserving their significant and distinctive attributes (Lambert, 2019). The thesis contends that by highlighting unique elements within the coastal landscape and considering the needs of both younger and older generations, public spaces can be used to foster social cohesion and contribute to the future development of coastal towns (Lambert, 2019).

## **Suggestions from community and academic research**

The following are overarching suggestions and ideas from academic and community research to enhance social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, a more in-depth analysis of these suggestions and ideas will be required when reviewing the Measurement Framework and updating the Baseline Indicators Report.

### **Making both minority and majority groups responsible for social integration will improve social cohesion**

Nachowitz (2015) examined historical settlement narratives and census data in Aotearoa New Zealand. He proposed a new framework of thinking about social integration. The framework posits that current policies and decisions often view minority groups solely as recipients, neglecting their potential contributions. The framework suggests strategies for facilitating their integration into society. It shifts the responsibility for social integration onto both minority and majority groups for articulating what could work rather than have one group decide for the other. It is further argued that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the significance of accurate self-identification among minority groups, and about how to involve the majority population in programmes for minority integration. Through this approach, establishing institutional backing for a unified national identity could help facilitate and promote essential social cohesion strategies in Aotearoa New Zealand (Nachowitz, 2015). Additionally, community groups noted that more effort is needed to promote gender equality because gender diverse people face many barriers to participation (IA). There could also be opportunities to promote gender equality within migrant and refugee communities' groups.

### **Culturally appropriate support services improve wellbeing and inclusiveness in society**

Community research reported that investing in culturally appropriate services tailored to the specific needs of different ethnic communities and minority groups would contribute to more positive wellbeing outcomes for these populations and help improve inclusiveness in society (IA). A recommendation was to provide support for positive resettlement/settlement and wellbeing outcomes for former refugees and marginalised migrants. It was noted that support should be in relation to advocacy (access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services), entitlements to benefits, housing and other services, system navigation support, and connecting to communities (BA). Furthermore, community research noted that these could apply to other migrants and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand

### **Programmes that promote family relationships reduce social isolation**

While community research did not identify specific enablers and barriers to family and sexual violence prevention, it did recommend that preventative education and initiatives ought to begin within families. The research emphasised the importance of trust within families, and the theme that prevention education should begin within families to foster participation and cohesion within the community (ALAC). Community research highlighted the need for programs to promote positive family relationships and combat social isolation (ALAC).



## **Heritage language maintenance benefits sense of identity and social cohesion**

Heritage language maintenance yields benefits to wellbeing, identity development, academic and economic performance, and improves social cohesion (Connelly, 2022). To enable more successful heritage language maintenance, there needs to be more collaboration between families, communities, schools, and government (Connelly, 2022). Community research suggests that funding and other types of support could assist families and young children access services and opportunities to maintain not only their heritage language but also facilitate the learning of English among those who do not currently have the ability or resources to do so.

## **Equitable digital access enhances community participation and connection**

Digital exclusion was noted as a barrier for participation and connectedness at various levels including engaging with critical systems and processes for settlement to connecting within families, especially when major events impact on families and wider communities. From a Pacific lens, equitable digital access especially for Pacific families and caregivers in low socio-economic communities would improve connection and participation. This could be in the form of better access to Wi-Fi, digital devices and upskilling of parents and caregivers from these communities (Tuitama, 2020). This type of support could also be relevant for other ethnic groups and sub-groups given some of the barriers related to access to appropriate services for resettlement.

## **Local governments' involvement in communities improves social cohesion**

Having safe and supportive environments are critical for fostering participation and trust among various community groups. McNaughton (2012) looked into tourism opportunities and suggested that local governments can play a critical role in fostering understanding of their communities' needs and promoting their participation. It was noted that local governments and organisations should proactively engage with their communities to achieve community cohesion, communication, and co-operation (McNaughton, 2012). This also speaks to the value of having major events where community groups work together to host them to promote social inclusion and cohesion.

## **Mixed-use collective housing facilitates community and social cohesion**

Satisfaction with housing was viewed as an enabler for community building, trust, and participation. Therefore, it is important to consider what this might entail for different communities. People reported that they want to live in communities where they feel safe and where their wellbeing is not compromised. Whyte (2020) has suggested that mixed-use collective housing as an integrated approach for housing development could improve social cohesion. More inclusive, socially adaptable, needs-oriented housing has the potential to facilitate community and social cohesion; reduce social isolation; encourage diversity and inclusion; and reduce spatial inequality. This could be explored further as an approach to better integrate communities to foster social cohesion.



## **Valuing indigenous knowledge has benefits for wider community**

The validation and appreciation of indigenous knowledge, along with the preservation of Māori practices and traditions can yield significant benefits to the wider community (IA). Incorporating teachings about Te Tiriti, local history, and te reo Māori into the education system can enhance inclusivity and accessibility. Validating and appreciating indigenous knowledge not only fosters a sense of belonging but also opens new possibilities in communities. People have spoken about how the integration of indigenous knowledge into social practices contributes to transformative conversations and relationships (IA).

# Conclusion

## **At present, community data does not adequately address measurement gaps, but does contain insights for the review of the Measurement Framework**

This stocktake of community-led research, and Master's and PhD theses, was commissioned to investigate whether community data could be used to fill the gaps in the Measurement Framework. The four gaps were spread across the three priority areas of respect and recognition, participation, and trust, and were specifically related to tracking:

- willingness to engage with others
- perception that people can disagree respectfully
- perception of representation
- perception of fair treatment.

This community research project highlighted that while there is ample knowledge and data pertaining to social cohesion in the community, it is not always experienced or observable as the discrete constructs outlined in the Measurement Framework. In this report insights relating to respect and recognition, participation and trust could be identified, but did not adequately fill data gaps because of this mismatch between the construct set out in the Measurement Framework, and how this construct was more diffusely experienced and measured in the real world by communities.

In conclusion, while we plan to use the insights in the upcoming review of the Measurement Framework and the update of the Baseline Indicators Report, they don't provide specific indicators or data sources to fill data gaps as anticipated when this work was commissioned.

This stocktake report highlighted the interconnectedness of the priority outcome areas of recognition and respect, trust, and participation. It also noted that community organisations had not focused specifically on these outcome areas for their research, but had explored related concepts, such as sense of belonging.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: List of 14 community organisations

Organisation	Target group	Location
Belong Aotearoa (BA)	Migrant and Ethnic	Auckland
New Zealand Chinese Association (NZCA)	Migrant and Ethnic	National
African Communities Forum Incorporated (ACOFI)	Migrant and Ethnic	Auckland
Aotearoa Latin American Community Inc (ALAC)	Migrant and Ethnic	Auckland
Asian Family Services (AFS)	Migrant and Ethnic	Auckland
Asian Network Inc (TANI)	Migrant and Ethnic	Auckland
New Zealand Indian Central Association (NZICA)	Migrant and Ethnic	National
African Community Council of Wellington (ACCW)	Migrant and Ethnic	Wellington
Federation of Islamic Associations of NZ (FIANZ)	Faith-based	National
Islamic Women's Council New Zealand (IWCNZ)	Faith-based	National
Baha'I Faith New Zealand (BFNZ)	Faith-based	Auckland
Voice of Aroha (VA)	Migrant and Ethnic	Wellington
Aotearoa Federation New Zealand of Tamil Sangam (AFTSNZ)	National Federation of Tamil societies in NZ	Auckland
Inclusive Aotearoa (IA)	All Migrants and Ethnic groups	Auckland



# Community Insights from the Social Cohesion Fund

A Narrative Report



August 2024



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



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## Disclaimer

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the researchers and participants and are not the official position of MSD.

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Limitations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Report Structure</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Part One: Background and Methods to the Community Insights Project</b>	<b>7</b>
The community insights project leveraged Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Fund to engage with communities and population sub-groups about the experience and measurement of social cohesion priority outcome areas	7
Leveraging the Fund for community research further “supports communities to [...] create conditions for positive social interactions to occur and therefore contribute to social cohesion”	8
This community insights project aimed to provide insights from up to 12 diverse community sub-groups who completed initiatives supported by the Fund	8
MSD held hui with community group representatives to discuss their experience of Measurement Framework gaps, and sub-group differences	9
<b>Part Two: Stories from the Fund</b>	<b>10</b>
Thematic analysis focused on identifying and collating common ideas from hui notes and Fund feedback forms	10
Person-centred, place-based, and needs-oriented approaches can improve social cohesion outcomes	10
The Fund enabled community groups to deliver beyond their standard services	11
Social cohesion initiatives enabled by the Fund had positive flow-on impacts within the community	12
Community groups can contribute qualitative insights at the individual level	13
Reducing the physical and psychological barriers to participation improves opportunities for social cohesion	13
Data gap topics and priority outcome areas were not always observable as discrete entities	14
Community groups lack the resources to properly record insights	14

<b>Part 3: Insights and Lessons Learned</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Insights</b>	<b>15</b>
Social cohesion in community means bringing people together	15
Failure to acknowledge diversity within populations may mask sub-groups' unique needs and experiences of social cohesion	15
Links between priority outcome areas mean that outcomes in one priority area can have impacts across others	16
Measuring social cohesion may benefit from a mixed-methods approach	16
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<b>17</b>
Consider reviewing the many inter-related constructs and concepts underpinning the Measurement Framework	17
Consider that the Measurement Framework's focus on sub-group differences could be reframed to understanding sub-groups' unique needs	17
Consider the inclusion of qualitative and quantitative evidence as sources to populate the Measurement Framework	17
<b>Part 4: Conclusions</b>	<b>18</b>
Community insights did not fill Measurement Framework gaps as intended, but contained important learnings as to how these gaps might be addressed in the future	18
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>19</b>
Initiatives Bridging Community Needs and Social Cohesion Outcome	19
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>22</b>
Social Cohesion Community Insight Questions	22
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>23</b>
Ethics Assessment Short Form: Social Cohesion Community Insights Project	23
Details of the activity	23
Signed team declaration	26
<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>27</b>
Social Cohesion Community Fund Insights Hui	27
Information Sheet for Participants	

# Executive Summary

In May 2023, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) identified options to address gaps in the Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Measurement Framework (the Measurement Framework) by undertaking a community insights research project.

This community insights project was commissioned to leverage Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Community Fund (the Fund) as a way to engage with communities and smaller population sub-groups about social cohesion outcomes and Measurement Framework gaps.

Thematic analysis of this feedback highlighted insights about communities' experience and measurement of social cohesion, that:

- Measurement Framework constructs (e.g., 'perception of representation' and 'perception of fair treatment') are often experienced in an interlinked way. Because of this, measuring them as discrete items as in the current Measurement Framework may not always be possible or provide the best indication of progress toward social cohesion
- Recognise that while sub-groups may articulate experiences of social cohesion in similar terms, the needs underlying those experiences are often different and unique
- Many community sub-groups gather qualitative insights that detail experiences of social cohesion at the individual level which is information not yet captured by the Measurement Framework.

Three key learnings emerged, namely that Measurement Framework gaps might be improved by:

- understanding the many inter-related constructs and concepts underpinning the Measurement Framework
- reframing the Measurement Framework's focus on sub-group differences to understanding sub-groups' unique needs
- using community or individual voice, as well as insights from numerical data at the population level, to inform the measurement of strategy indicators.

# Purpose

The purpose of this community insights project was to leverage the Fund as a way to engage with smaller population sub-groups about social cohesion outcomes and address Measurement Framework gaps.

# Limitations

Several limitations apply to this report.

While Fund recipients were identified as a convenience sample for this research, and insights drawn from the thematic analysis of Fund recipients' feedback discuss the impact of Fund-grants, **this report does not represent an evaluation of the Fund.**

Insights relating to respect and recognition, participation, and trust could be identified but did not adequately fill data gaps because of a mismatch between the construct set out in the Measurement Framework, and how that construct was experienced and measured in the real world by communities.

# Report Structure

This report is presented in four parts:

- **Part One provides background to this community insights project,** why it was established and what it consisted of. This section also describes the community groups who attended the insights gathering hui, and the data collection and analysis methods used.
- **Part Two presents the project's findings as stories of the Fund,** describing communities' experiences of respect and recognition, trust, and participation (Measurement Framework priority outcome areas).
- **Part Three presents community insights and lessons learned** for future work on the Measurement Framework.
- **Part Four presents the conclusion** that while community insights did not fill Measurement Framework gaps as intended, they contain important learnings as to how these gaps might be addressed in the future.

# Part One: Background and Methods to the Community Insights Project

**The community insights project leveraged the Fund to engage with communities and population sub-groups about the experience and measurement of social cohesion priority outcome areas.**

Released in October 2022, Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Strategic Framework (the Strategic Framework) identifies actions and outcomes to work towards a central vision of social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> This Strategic Framework was developed in response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) into the terrorist attack on a Christchurch mosque on 15 March 2019.

At the same time, the Measurement Framework was developed to help track and measure progress towards social cohesion, and to help communities articulate their own contribution to social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>2</sup> A baseline indicators report based on the Measurement Framework highlighted four data gaps in three Measurement Framework priority outcome areas.

**Table 1: Measurement gaps in priority outcome areas**

Priority outcome area	Identified data gaps
People, families, whānau and communities are <b>recognised</b> for who they are and <b>respect</b> others	Indicators for 1. Willingness to engage with others 2. Perception that people can disagree respectfully Understanding differences across smaller population sub-groups
People, families, whānau and communities <b>trust</b> each other and institutions	Indicators for 3. Perception of representation 4. Perception of fair treatment Understanding differences across smaller population sub-groups
People, families, whānau and communities are willing and able to <b>participate</b>	Understanding differences across smaller population sub-groups

<sup>1</sup> Social cohesion can be understood as the strengthening of interpersonal and inter-group bonds between and across diverse communities, which is often viewed as a key protective factor that can reduce the likelihood of terrorist behaviours.

Orazani, S. N., Reynolds, K. J., & Osbourne, H. (2023). What works and why in interventions to strengthen social cohesion: A systematic review. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1–58.

<sup>2</sup> [appendix-4-measurement-framework.pdf \(msd.govt.nz\)](#)

Two community research projects were identified as options to help address the different priority outcome measurement challenges:

- a stocktake and thematic analysis of community-led research completed by 14 community groups, and of Master's and PhD theses abstracts relating to social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- using the Fund as a way to gather community insights from smaller population sub-groups (that is, Fund recipients) about their experience of these Measurement Framework priority outcome areas and data gaps.

### **Leveraging the Fund for community research further “supports communities to [...] create conditions for positive social interactions to occur and therefore contribute to social cohesion”<sup>3</sup>**

In 2022, Cabinet approved the establishment of a one-off social cohesion community grant fund of \$2million. The Fund was open to applications of up to 200 community groups, to “support community led initiatives that foster social cohesion”.<sup>4</sup> Community research is an essential component of the Measurement Framework; by gathering feedback and insights from Fund recipients who used grants to contribute to social cohesion locally, this community research helps build evidence of what works to strengthen social cohesion in local contexts.

### **This community insights project aimed to provide insights from up to 12 diverse community sub-groups who completed initiatives supported by the Fund**

The initiatives included in this project would be chosen to reflect different group perspectives (e.g., Māori, Pacific peoples, rainbow communities, disabled people, faith-based communities, women), locations, types of initiatives and priority social cohesion outcomes. Community group involvement would be voluntary, and the project outcomes designed to be of value to the community groups themselves.

The project would describe the initiatives and include focus group discussions to understand the experiences of small population sub-groups, local context, and approaches to local measurement of Measurement Framework priority outcomes areas.

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<sup>3</sup> Recommendation 37 of the 2022 Cabinet Paper “Strengthening social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand”.

<sup>4</sup> Recommendation 37 of the 2022 Cabinet Paper “Strengthening social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand”.

## **MSD held hui with community group representatives to discuss their experience and measurement of social cohesion Measurement Framework gaps, and sub-group differences**

### **Participants**

While all 200 Fund-recipients were required to return feedback forms, only 150 had done so by August 2023. Feedback forms described who Fund-recipients were (community groups and organisations), and their experience of running initiatives to improve priority outcome areas of respect and recognition, trust, and participation in their communities

MSD invited representatives from 15 community groups to participate in a follow-up community insights hui. We used a selection criterion to identify a range of organisations who represented different community and sub-group perspectives (e.g., Māori, Pacific peoples, rainbow communities, disabled people, faith-based communities, women), locations, types of initiatives and priority social cohesion outcomes.

Participants were informed via an information sheet, (and verbally at the hui) that participation was voluntary, and that participation would be remunerated with a \$100 voucher as koha. Representatives from eight community groups participated in the community insights hui (see Appendix 1 for a description of the initiatives).

### **Data collection**

MSD held two virtual hui to hear from community group representatives about their experiences of social cohesion data gaps and sub-group differences. Four participants attended each hui, which followed a semi-structured format to ensure the same questions were asked (see Appendix 2 for the list of questions).

Community insights discussed at the hui were written down as anonymised notes. These notes and insights from Fund feedback forms represent the qualitative data from which this report draws its findings.

### **Data analysis**

MSD undertook thematic analysis of the notes taken during the hui and information from Fund feedback forms, focusing on identifying common ideas across these sources to produce key narrative themes.

### **Ethics and privacy**

To ensure this work met MSD's ethical protocols, an application was submitted to MSD's Ethics Panel and approved in August 2023 (see Appendix 3 for the Ethics Assessment form). Consent processes were followed, with participation information and consent sheets distributed (see Appendix 4 for the Information and Consent Sheet).

As per MSD's privacy and security standards, this data was stored on password protected computers in secure facilities. In accordance with these standards, the names of community groups and their representatives are not included in this report to further protect the privacy of those groups and the people they serve (for further information see Appendix 4).



# Part Two: Stories from the Fund

## **Thematic analysis focused on identifying and collating common ideas from hui notes and Fund feedback forms<sup>5</sup>**

Hui questions (Appendix 2) targeted the experience of each of the Measurement Framework priority outcome areas of respect and recognition, participation, and trust, which were identified as having some data gaps. However, it quickly became apparent during conversation that experience and measurement of these factors was deeply interlinked and difficult to distinguish or tease apart.

Through thematic analysis of the qualitative insights gathered at the hui, other trends in the experience, understanding or measurement of social cohesion became apparent. These trends in the experiences, insights and lessons relating to the social cohesion data gaps are described below and presented under common narrative themes.

## **Person-centred, place-based, and needs-oriented approaches can improve social cohesion outcomes**

Communities had unique and specific needs that needed to be met and fulfilled in different ways. For some in South Auckland, there was a need to re-unite as a community after periods of COVID-19 restrictions, coming together to share food, relax and celebrate. For others on the East Coast, needs were urgent such as food and shelter following Cyclone Gabrielle.<sup>6</sup> While the Fund was intended to help local organisations host activities, bring communities together and build social cohesion, Cyclone Gabrielle often presented a greater and more immediate need within some areas.

One hui participant highlighted that for them, adopting a social cohesion mindset meant “*we need to keep asking, what are your needs*”. This person-centred approach reminds us that communities are made of individuals and whānau, and that we can improve the lives of many, one person at a time. This sentiment also reflects that community needs are not static, but dynamic and ever changing because the lives of and needs of the people who make up those communities are dynamic and ever changing. The hui participant further stated that a person-centred approach helps refresh services, and when organisations are similarly dynamic, they are better able to meet communities’ unique needs. It was reported that the more communities experienced their needs being fulfilled, the more they participated, felt recognised and respected, and learnt to trust the groups, institutions and infrastructures that support them.

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<sup>5</sup> Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. London: SAGE Publications.

<sup>6</sup> Many recipients of the fund utilised the grants to support their communities’ responses to adversity – it just so happened that Cyclone Gabrielle occurred around the same time application for fund grants opened. Because of this, many groups discussed their experiences of social cohesion in relation to Cyclone Gabrielle, however, it should be noted that Cyclone Gabrielle is just one instance of how social cohesion can be enhanced in times of crisis. The social cohesion stocktake has also found evidence to suggest that social cohesion becomes more important during times of crisis – seen specifically in Christchurch following the Mosque attack on 15 March 2019.

Hui participants further noted that the non-prescriptive way the Fund was distributed meant it was easier for groups to tailor initiatives to address communities' unique and specific needs. For example, a group supporting a rural Coromandel community observed a gap in both income and food security following Cyclone Gabrielle. To help address these gaps, this group facilitated the build of a community garden. The project involved utilising local experts such as architects, designers, tohunga and gardeners to build a community garden for the benefit of all. Half the garden was dedicated as a leisure space for people to gather, the other half was designed to be a low-maintenance vegetable garden.

This collaboration helped meet the needs of a diverse community often separated by a significant income gap. For those struggling to put food on the table, the garden provided food when it was scarce. For those who were more well off, the community garden provided an opportunity to contribute to the lives of others in a positive and empowering way. Through this garden initiative this community participated together, built respect and recognition for each other's experiences and needs, which resulted in enhanced demonstrations of trust across the people. Such initiatives demonstrate the value of investing in communities' specific and differing needs, and how effectively this fosters social cohesion.

### **The Fund enabled community groups to deliver beyond their standard services**

The extra financial support provided through the Fund gave groups "*breathing space*", allowing the flexibility to pivot services and adapt to unforeseen circumstances, such as Cyclone Gabrielle. Many groups and organisations who applied for the Fund were well established in their communities, and already delivered a range of standard services (e.g., after-school youth groups, phone-based counselling). Hui attendees representing such organisations said that the increased financing through the Fund helped resource these services and enabled more staff on the ground during times of disaster or increased need.

The Fund also helped organisations host additional initiatives or events on top of their standard services, which boosted local awareness of, and engagement with those organisations. These extra services helped bridge and build trust between communities and organisations because the organisations on the ground were able to engage with community members in new and meaningful ways.

## **Social cohesion initiatives enabled by the Fund had positive flow-on impacts within the community**

Community groups emphasised deep gratitude for the Fund, and explicitly requested that their feedback that ‘micro-investments had a big impact for resource-poor communities’ was passed on. Participants further stated that, while it might not seem like a lot, the grant went a long way to increase communities respect and recognition, trust and participation through a series of immediate, secondary and tertiary flow-on effects.<sup>7</sup>

Such flow-on effects were described by a hui attendee whose community group coordinated Cyclone Gabrielle recovery efforts by distributing farming resources and undertaking welfare checks. An immediate impact of these efforts was a sharp increase in demand for this group’s support services, as evidenced in the organisation’s administrative data as an increased number of referrals and self-referrals.<sup>8</sup>

The recovery responses supported by the Fund had a ripple effect where seemingly small initial actions flowed on to generate secondary and tertiary effects. When viewed together, these small actions culminated in a greater degree of impact.

Immediate impacts triggered other secondary flow-on effects like an increasing number of community members reaching out to each other to enhance local connectivity, strengthening personal and business networks (i.e., as farmers), and reinvigorating their sense of community. Hui attendees highlighted that the events and actions enabled by the Fund activated further potential in the community. While the community group helped connect farmers who had been affected by the cyclone, these relationships and networks continued to develop without further intervention from community groups or organisations.

These secondary impacts then gave rise to further tertiary impacts, described as actions originating in communities without any involvement from the Fund-supported organisations. An example of a tertiary impact was a Matariki dinner organised for and by reconnected farmers. These flow-on effects demonstrate that social cohesion did not stop when the community group’s interventions or activities ceased. Rather, hui attendees explained, the Fund helped organisations contact hard-to-reach, isolated farmers and connect them with a support network of similar individuals who would proceed to organise and function as a community themselves. At each stage of this ripple effect, newly generated actions increased communities’ participation, respect and recognition, and demonstrations of trust and belonging.

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<sup>7</sup> Immediate effects can be defined as those impacts that are direct results of the funding, for example having more money enabling more food to be bought and delivered to a community. Secondary effects can be defined as those impacts that are flow-on from the immediate effects, for example families in need receiving more food works to increase health and wellbeing in that family over the short term. Tertiary effects can be defined as those impacts that occur when primary and secondary effects intersect in the longer term, for example when families who experienced food shortage during flooding are fed and happy, they are able to redirect their own energy to respond to the flood damage in their environments themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Referrals defined as when an individual is put in touch with the community group by another individual or organisation, and self-referrals where individuals get in touch with the community group themselves.

## **Community groups can contribute qualitative insights at the community level**

One hui attendee said that photos are often used by their organisation as a simple but effective way to capture experiential data and tell insightful stories relating to social cohesion.<sup>9</sup> Photographs of events and initiatives can detail the numbers of attendees, providing inferential data about participation. Photographs capture attendees' facial expressions, body language, and group behaviour which is useful for making inferences about the extent of within-group levels of respect and recognition. Finally, when initiatives were recurrent, community groups could compare images from each event to monitor changes or variation in these factors over time.

Hui attendees also highlighted that monitoring interactions between groups (e.g., phone calls, referrals, shared clientele) helped them understand the experience of social cohesion in their community. Recording the number of individuals and other organisations who made contact not only gave indications of participation but also indicated the extent that an organisation was perceived to be trustworthy or worthy of engagement. If the number of engagements went up, participation and trust were thought to increase; if they went down, participation and trust were thought to decrease.

These are only two examples of how qualitative individual level insights are captured by community organisations, but hui attendees emphasised their interest in being able to better share such insights with MSD to help improve understandings of social cohesion.

## **Reducing the physical and psychological barriers to participation improves opportunities for social cohesion**

Hui attendees reflected that pre-empting and reducing potential physical and psychological barriers helped facilitate greater participation. Especially, amongst hard-to-reach individuals across rural, LGBTQIA+, women, Māori, Pacific, resettled and refugee, and faith-based community sub-groups.

Across initiatives, common physical barriers to participation included insufficient or inaccessible transport, high costs associated with attendance (e.g., fuel, public transport, childcare), lack of sufficient accommodation, and inaccessible locations (e.g., too far away, poor parking, poor disabled access). Common psychological barriers included heightened distress, fear of rejection (e.g., by others in community), lack of social understandings (e.g., of social etiquette to engage effectively, comfortably and safely), stigma (e.g., microaggressions, racism, prejudice across ethnically and culturally diverse groups, fear of violence) and risk of increased mental load.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Experiential data is a form of qualitative data and is understood as knowledge that comes from doing or experiencing something, for example, experiential knowledge of racism for some may come from having experienced being the target of racial prejudice themselves.

Humble, A., & Radina, M. (2010). *How qualitative data analysis happens: moving beyond "themes emerged"* Routledge

<sup>10</sup> Mental load is the cognitive effort involved in managing work, relationships, family, and households. It covers all of the details your brain manages throughout the day, including your responsibilities and decision-making. Factors impacting the mental load noted by hui attendees included the additional energy required to combat stigma, or for parents who need to arrange childcare to attend, or figure out how to source funds, plan travel and accommodation.

Hui participants emphasised that physical and psychological barriers were often experienced together resulting in higher distress, mental load, and decision fatigue. They explained that for such community members it was easier to avoid over-burdening an already high mental load than engage with events, organisations or activities at all. Hui attendees shared that to improve participation in events, it helps if organisations do some of the work to overcome or alleviate the pressure of some physical or psychological barriers.

One hui attendee shared that for their Fund-supported event they prepared hundreds of hāngī and umu family meals, which were gone before the event was halfway through. They reflected that if people know they can simply *“come as they are, and just turn up, knowing there’ll be something for them to do, food to feed the family, and activities to keep the children engaged”* then the turnout is good. In other words, if some of the barriers to participation are removed (e.g., enough money or food for the whole family), people feel their needs are respected and recognised, and their ability to participate is increased. The hui attendee continued that *“knowing that whānau and families left with full bellies after a day of connecting”* was a good indication that social cohesion had been enhanced.

### **Data gap topics and priority outcome areas were not always observable as discrete entities**

Hui attendees noted that, while the four data gap topics were identifiable within their communities, they were seldom identified as distinct entities.<sup>11</sup> Rather, they were understood as interconnected constructs that fell within broader interpretations of the priority outcome areas.<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, while attendees felt knowledge to fill these data gaps existed in communities, it was often difficult to capture and express that knowledge in alignment with how those constructs are defined in the Measurement Framework.

### **Community groups lack the resources to properly record and share insights**

Hui attendees reflected that service providers often retain their experiential or qualitative data, but only in their heads. They explained this is usually because they are so busy with the provision of services that they seldom have the time or resources to record the insights and lessons learned along the way.<sup>13</sup>

In the instances where they did have well documented data relating to social cohesion, hui attendees noted that confidentiality breaches posed further barriers to sharing their community insights. In addition, while community groups want to share their knowledge of data gap topics and priority outcome areas, doing so without gaining consent from individuals can be ethically problematic. Navigating issues relating to consent, confidential data (e.g., health and wellbeing records, accessing social support), and data storage often requires resourcing that community groups do not have.

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<sup>11</sup> Data gaps included: willingness to engage with others; perception that people can disagree respectfully; perception of representation; and, perception of fair treatment.

<sup>12</sup> Priority outcome areas of respect and recognition, participation, and trust.

<sup>13</sup> Resources noted included a lack of computers, or record-making tools, time, and personnel.

# Part Three: Insights and Lessons Learned

## Insights

This community insights project has highlighted several ways that social cohesion was experienced across some of Aotearoa New Zealand's different communities.

### **Social cohesion in community means bringing people together**

Through the hui and Fund feedback forms, it became clear that one commonality across communities' experience of social cohesion initiatives was the focus on bringing people together. An attendee said that, if they had just one message for people to know, it was "*we just want to see you*". For Fund recipients and hui participants alike, social cohesion is about bringing the individual to be part of 'the people', building connections, and giving space for new relationships. Hui attendees specifically, felt that social cohesion at the grassroots level was about strengthening communities by bringing people together, and in doing so, recognising and respecting their needs and encouraging inclusive participation to help meet those needs.

### **Failure to acknowledge diversity within populations may mask sub-groups' unique needs and experiences of social cohesion**

One of the aims of this research was to understand if communities had sub-group specific data for data gaps in Measurement Framework priority outcome areas. Across all of the narrative themes, sub-group factors (ethnicity, age, gender, religion) often shaped and determined the type of initiative supported by the Fund. Subsequently then, any insights stemming from these groups was also likely to be influenced by these underlying sub-group differences.

Furthermore, one hui attendee stressed the importance of acknowledging the heterogeneity within population sub-groups (e.g., the diversity of cultures and ethnicities existing within Auckland's Muslim community). It was noted that within Aotearoa New Zealand, ethnic populations are often homogenised into overarching groups (e.g., African, Asian). This simplification results in a lack of recognition of the unique and diverse needs within these communities.

Hui attendees acknowledged the need for sub-group specific data and reflected that while diverse community sub-groups might share similar experiences of social cohesion, the diversity of needs underlying those experiences can be overlooked. Hui attendees then highlighted that there is a tension between gathering data that represents unique experiences of small population sub-groups, whilst also fitting into a Measurement Framework that is applied at the national level.

## **Links between priority outcome areas mean that outcomes in one priority area can have impacts across others**

One hui attendee reflected that the grant enabled them to host a community fun day making their organisation and the services they offered more visible to their community. This increased the community engagement and subsequently, participation and trust in their standard ongoing services. Another hui attendee said that delivering initiatives with the focus on priority outcome areas taught them how *“trust is hard won, but easily lost”*. They further clarified that an important aspect of retaining a client’s trust is through the reliability and consistency of service.

It is important for community groups and organisations to have sufficient resources to provide consistent quality services all of the time, because this helps clients build and maintain trust in that service or organisation. Exemplifying this point, several hui attendees shared how the supply chain breakdown during COVID-19 and Cyclone Gabrielle meant they were not able to provide weekly food baskets and host support sessions with families like they normally would. Without that consistency of engagement, these organisations experienced a decline in participation, community engagement and received anecdotal accounts of a decreased perception of social cohesion.

## **Measuring social cohesion may benefit from a mixed-methods approach**

The scarcity of resources that community organisations often experience means that data collection frequently occurs with any available tools – whether that is counting the number of names on a roll (giving numerical, quantitative data) or looking back through photos of an event (giving experiential, qualitative data). Incorporation of a mixed-methods data approach to populate the Measurement Framework may better represent and incorporate communities’ nuanced and diverse experiences of social cohesion.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Mixed-methods refers to the utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative data.

## Lessons Learned

Based on these community insights, Measurement Framework gaps might be addressed by the following learnings.

### **Consider reviewing the many inter-related constructs and concepts underpinning the Measurement Framework**

This research found that the constructs within the Measurement Framework are experienced by communities in an interlinked way. Because of this, measuring them as discrete items may not always be possible or provide the best understanding of social cohesion, as it is actually experienced by communities.

### **Consider that the Measurement Framework's focus on sub-group differences could be reframed to understanding sub-groups' unique needs**

The phrasing of 'sub-group differences' implies that the experiences and thus needs of all community sub-groups relating to social cohesion are the same. What this research has shown is that while sub-groups may articulate experiences of social cohesion in similar terms, the needs that underlie those experiences are often different and unique.

### **Consider the inclusion of qualitative and quantitative evidence as sources to populate the Measurement Framework**

Being able to include qualitative insights, such as those gained in the current project, will help include the voices and experiences of community sub-groups in the Measurement Framework. This qualitative data speaks to experience at the individual level, the meaning and value of which can be magnified further when it is held alongside quantitative data which speaks to experience at the population level.



# Part Four: Conclusions

## **Community insights did not fill Measurement Framework gaps as intended, but contained important learnings as to how these gaps might be addressed in the future**

This community insights project was commissioned to leverage the Fund as a way to engage with smaller population sub-groups about social cohesion outcomes and gaps in priority outcome areas of the Measurement Framework.

Insights highlighted that while there is ample knowledge and data pertaining to social cohesion in the community, it is not always experienced or observable as the discrete constructs outlined in the Measurement Framework. Subsequently, though insights relating to respect and recognition, participation, and trust could be identified, they did not adequately fill data gaps. This mismatch between the construct set out in the Measurement Framework, and how that construct was experienced and measured in the real world by communities could be considered in future work.

In conclusion, while these community insights improve understandings of how social cohesion is experienced by different groups and localities, they do not provide specific indicators for sub-groups of interest, or data sources to fill data gaps as anticipated when this work was commissioned.

# Appendix 1.

## Initiatives Bridging Community Needs and Social Cohesion Outcomes

What were the... ?		
Community Needs	Initiatives	Social Cohesion Outcomes
An opportunity to connect urban Rangatahi Māori with their cultural practices in an accessible way, that included people of all skill levels, and removed the pressure of performing or competing.	Weekly after-work Kapa Haka sessions for rangatahi Māori and young whānau, to enjoy kapa haka outside of the competition and performance context.	Repeated sessions established rangatahi Māori's faith in the reliability of the service, which helped builds trust, respect and recognition, and participation.
Following flooding and cyclones affecting the north island in early 2023, people in the Coromandel experienced increased food insecurity and decreased trust in each other. The community had the very wealthy living next door to the very poor – leading to a growing sense of tension in the community.	Building a community garden using Te Ao Māori knowledge. The garden produces seasonal crops for the community and provides a space for children and young people to play and hang out around adults, including local design, tohunga and horticultural experts in the Coromandel.	Building a community garden brought people together to use the expertise across the socio-economic divide, whilst fulfilling the need for more food. Coming together with purpose helped alleviate tensions in community, build greater trust and inclusive participation whilst also recognising and respecting the urgent and diverse needs of those from different socio-economic backgrounds.
Settling into a new country can be a disorienting and isolating experience.	Fortnightly cultural support sessions, language assistance, and delivery of halal meals, and Ramadan events that accommodate whole families with appropriate prayer spaces, childcare, interpretation services and food.	Facilitating positive interactions between newly resettled people and their new communities builds stronger sense of belonging which encourages greater participation and trust of that new community. It also helps the community respect and recognise the challenges of re-settling.

<p>This organisation has a national focus and works to support all women across Aotearoa New Zealand and has a long history of advocating for women's rights and needs.</p>	<p>Safe educational sessions for women, encouraging financial independence, self-confidence, promoting diversity, and self-advocacy in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.</p>	<p>These events help respect and recognise what the needs (at a very high-level) across Aotearoa New Zealand are. This insight helps inform what future events should focus on to increase participation and reinforce the trusted position this group has for communities and political bodies.</p>
<p>Need for re-settled peoples to be having discussions with the challenges of finding and building community in a new country – sharing with other resettled people and well settled New Zealanders.</p>	<p>Hosting a series of community events “kai and korero” on different topics (networking, climate action, social cohesion) throughout the year, and creating a podcast to record and expand on discussions from these events in parallel.</p>	<p>These initiatives gave respect and recognition to the migrant experience, whilst building trust and inclusive participation between re-settled and well-settled people in the Wellington region. These initiatives strengthen social cohesion by overcoming sociodemographic borders, giving resettled people greater opportunities for participation in Aotearoa New Zealand society, and enabling well-settled people to better understand and overcome divisive discourses that can surround the topic of migration.</p>
<p>North Island farmers were seriously impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle, losing livestock, crops, and homes. The trauma and shame experienced led to increased isolation in farmers, who desperately needed food, financial, farming, veterinary and social support.</p>	<p>Supporting Northland farmers in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle. Monthly dinners and a Matariki event brought isolated individuals together so they could discuss and plan a response to an extremely stressful situation.</p>	<p>These initiatives gave farmers a place where they could simply turn up, without doing any work, firstly to process their loss and secondly to plan for recovery as a community. The positive impact these services had travelled by word of mouth, increased referrals and self-referrals for further services. These changes reflected increased trust, respect and recognition and participation between the service provider and rural northland farmers.</p>

<p>Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many families and people in South Auckland experienced increased stress and decreased levels of comfort being in community together.</p>	<p>Hosted a community fun day to boost morale and help whānau and families have at least one stress free day following intense COVID-19 restrictions in South Auckland.</p>	<p>The community fun day gave tired whānau and families a place to turn up, where they knew they would be fed and kids would be taken care of. By bringing people together in a very relaxed setting, this initiative helped people respect and recognise the troubles experienced in the pandemic, but learn that they could trust it was ok to come together again. Participation was increased because people knew they could simply bring themselves and nothing else had to be planned for – it was easy for everyone to participate.</p>
<p>Ethnic migrants, as rural farm workers can struggle to feel as if they fit into Aotearoa New Zealand society, and often lack the resources to understand it better.</p>	<p>Organised social events for rurally located migrant and resettled families and people, including Te Reo, Tikanga and Te Tiriti workshops, in rural central North Island.</p>	<p>These initiatives helped re-settled people who were potentially isolated by their rurality learn core aspects of Aotearoa New Zealand culture and society. This learning helped people feel more comfortable about participating within Aotearoa New Zealand society. People felt included, respected and recognised, the events themselves helping individuals build community and strengthen social connections.</p>

# Appendix 2.

## **Social Cohesion Community Insight Questions**

1. Do you have any first impressions, thoughts or feedback you'd like to share?
2. Could you tell us about trust in your community?
3. What about recognition and respect?
4. And levels of participation?
5. How were these concepts reflected in your communities' experiences? Generally, or, during implementation of the fund?
6. What kinds of difference did the social cohesion fund make for your community?
7. In what ways (any examples) did it contribute to:
8. Building trust?
9. Recognition and Respect?
10. Participation?
11. In your experience with your communities, how might you go about measuring changes related to social cohesion?
12. How would you know if improvements were occurring because of your initiatives?
13. Other questions, or points of feedback?

# Appendix 3.

## Ethics Assessment Short Form: Social Cohesion Community Insights Project

### Ethics Assessment Short Form



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Ethics assessment of research, evaluation and related activities aims to help keep participants and teams involved and the agencies undertaking or commissioning these activities safe. It seeks to ensure that these activities align with Ministry values:

- manaaki – we care about the wellbeing and success of people
- whānau – we are inclusive and build belonging
- mahi tahi – we work together, making a difference for communities
- tika me te pono – we do the right thing with integrity.

This short form helps teams undertaking research and evaluation and related activities that appear to be low or minimal risk identify whether the activity does present risks that they need to plan to mitigate. It can also help teams to decide whether a more in-depth ethical assessment is required.

If the activity is in scope for review by an external ethics committee (eg a Health and Disability Ethics Committee), you do not need to fill in this form.

#### Details of the activity

##### Title:

Community Insights Project: Reporting on the 2023 Social Cohesion Fund

##### Who has commissioned this activity?

Through Budget 2022, Cabinet authorised \$2.0 million for a one-year, time-limited, contestable Social Cohesion Fund to support community led action. This community fund was open for applicants from 27 October 2022 to 30 June 2023, with 200 possible grants of \$10,000 available. Māori, Communities and Participation at MSD oversaw the vetting of applications and the rewarding of grants. To align with the Social Sector Commissioning principles this was a high-trust, grants-based, flexible funding model, allocated according to priority.

In May 2023, Minister Radhakrishnan approved the collection of insights from a range of community groups funded by the Community Fund completed by 30 June 2023, with the goal of highlighting to Cabinet the value and impact of the Community Fund for diverse communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **What is the main purpose and objectives of the activity?**

The main purpose of this Insights Project is to engage with community groups, and gather information on the successes, value and impact of the Te Korowai Whetu Social Cohesion Community Fund (the Community Fund). Specifically, this research leverages community fund initiatives to engage with smaller sub-population groups about social cohesion outcomes in relation to the Te Korowai Whetu Social Cohesion Measurement Framework.

An online hui/focus group will be held to gather insights from up to 12 community sub-groups who completed initiatives funded by the Community Fund. This information will be presented back to the Minister in a Report by the end of September 2023.

### **Who are the participants in the activity and how will they be involved?**

The participants include representatives from up to 12 community-subgroups who received Community Fund grants. They will be involved, via sharing of their own experiences in an online hui/focus group, in response to a set of pre-determined questions.

These participants include representatives from community groups who represent or work with sub-groups of interest, including:

- Māori
- Pacific
- Rural
- Migrant Communities
- LGBTQIA+
- Disabled
- Women
- Children and Young People

### **How will you recruit the participants and collect information?**

Participants were recruited from the list of Community Fund recipients who had completed their initiatives, and reporting on these initiatives by 31 July 2023. A selection criterion was developed in partnership with MCP to help decide which community-groups would be appropriate to invite to the hui. These groups will be invited to the hui via email. Information about sub-groups experiences of social cohesion, and initiatives will be gathered as notes from these hui.

### **What are the potential risks from doing this activity (is there any risk of psychological harm, feelings of distress or embarrassment, disclosure of sensitive information, or compounding stigma?)**

We do not perceive any risks in association with this activity because all information will be kept strictly confidential in the reporting of this work. The gathered information will be stored in electronic form on password protected computers, located within secure facilities.

All prospective hui participants are aware that they are representing their respective organisation or community group. They are also aware that, in consenting to join the hui, any insights they do provide are liable to be included in our reporting back to Minister Radhakrishnan.

No personal information from individual participants will be collected or identified in any reporting or reporting summaries produced as a result of these engagements.

At the outset of the hui, the hui facilitator will make it clear that the pre-set questions will be used to guide and facilitate these engagements and help ensure that discussion does not veer onto topics which may upset participants. In the unlikely event that participants do become distressed, the hui facilitator will safely and politely end engagements, and check back in with those distressed individuals privately.

### **Will this activity be of interest, benefit, or concern to Māori?**

Given the integrated equity approach taken in the Social Cohesion package, and specifically with the distribution of grants, it is important to understand how well the Community Fund worked from the perspectives of Māori and Pacific peoples who were involved with the initiatives. This information will help reflect the diverse range of benefits communities to whom social cohesion benefits and is important.

Improving how MSD works with Māori and Pacific communities aligns with Te Pae Tawhiti, Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity strategies. Through the Insights Project, we will gather information on the extent that MSD achieved three objectives through the Community Fund:

- A positive experience every time
- Partnering for greater impact
- Supporting long-term social and economic development

How progress is made with respect to these three objectives will be captured in high-level detail, with the potential to be explored in greater detail with future Social Cohesion projects. Through this Insights Project, every effort will be made to speak with Māori community groups to highlight their unique experiences and perspectives in the reporting of the Community Fund.

### **Will this activity be of interest, benefit, or concern to Pacific peoples?**

As explained above, every effort will be made to speak with Pacific community groups to highlight their unique perspectives in the reporting of the Community Fund.

### **Have you considered the Tiriti principles of partnership, participation, and protection for this activity?**

Yes, Te Tiriti principles are embedded throughout the Social Cohesion framework, and thus, all Social Cohesion activities, including the distribution of the Community Fund.

Early engagement with Māori has highlighted the importance and overlap of Te Tiriti values (belonging, participation, trust and equity) with Social Cohesion components. With the additional understanding that inequities undermine social cohesion, and that rangatiratanga highlight the value of tailored approaches for different communities.



The inclusion of a diverse range of community groups in this Insights Project will help illuminate how aspects like belonging, participation, trust and equity were enhanced or experienced throughout different areas of Aotearoa New Zealand as a result of the Community Fund. These community insights will help inform subsequent Social Cohesion reporting to the Minister.

**Does your activity:**

- pose risks to researchers and/or participants that are beyond that which can be expected as part of everyday life?
- use data which is identifiable, or that does not align with client privacy statements?
- pose sensitive questions or focus specifically on vulnerable populations?

**If yes** to any of these three points: Reassess risk rating (see triage tool)

**If no** to all of the three points: Sign below, keep this assessment on file, forward to the Ethics Advisor for review, and reassess if ethical risks change over the course of the activity. You can seek advice from the Ethics Advisor or the Research Ethics Panel at any time.

**Signed team declaration**

**Project/activity lead:** Name: .....

Position: .....

Date: .....

**Manager:** Name: .....

Position: .....

Date: .....

**Please send your completed form to MSD's Ethics Advisor (email: [research@msd.govt.nz](mailto:research@msd.govt.nz)) who will be in touch if there are any follow up questions.**

# Appendix 4.

## Social Cohesion Community Fund Insights Hui Information Sheet for Participants

### What is the Social Cohesion Community fund?

The Social Cohesion Community fund (Community fund) was a time-limited fund where community-groups were able to apply for a one-off grant of up to \$10,000 to deliver a community initiative that addressed social cohesion outcomes. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) was responsible for distributing this fund to community groups.

### Why do we want to speak with you?

We are planning a hui to hear from the people and the communities who received a grant from the Community fund, and how the initiatives were experienced by different community groups. Your involvement in this hui is optional, and you do not have to participate if you do not want to.

**Please note that attendance at the hui will be taken as your consent to take part in this research.**

### Who is hosting the hui, or focus group?

This hui will be led or facilitated by Zoe Taptiklis from MSD's Research and Evaluation team. She has experience undertaking hui with the community. The Community fund Insights Project has oversight from Principal Analyst, Amy Richardson, and Research and Evaluation Manager, Mel Pande.

### What do we want to speak to you about?

We are interested in learning how social cohesion outcomes of respect and recognition, participation, and trust were experienced by communities taking part in initiatives funded by the Community fund. We are also interested in understanding how different communities might track changes in these outcomes over time.

With your permission, your community insights, and the findings from the hui will be documented as meeting notes. We are hoping to then include your insights (from these notes) in a report to Associate Minister Radhakrishnan on successes and value of the Community fund, and how social cohesion outcomes are seen and experienced in the community. This will be completed within two months of the hui/focus groups being conducted.

## **Are there benefits to participating?**

Your insights and knowledge will contribute to government understanding of social cohesion across different community groups, and how we can better measure it to support the wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

All community-groups represented at the hui will receive a \$100 voucher in recognition of their participation. A summary of the findings from the hui will also be shared back with everyone who takes part.

## **Are there risks to participating?**

Because every effort will be made to protect participant confidentiality, there are no foreseeable risks to your involvement. However, if you have any concerns, please contact Zoe before providing consent.

## **What about my privacy?**

No information that could personally identify you will be included in any reports of the hui insights or findings. We will ask them to keep the information shared at the hui confidential, but we will be relying on the cooperation of those who attend. Information collected by researchers will be stored in electronic form on password protected computers, located within secure facilities. This information will be stored in electronic form on password protected computers, located within secure facilities. No information that could personally identify you will be included in any reports of the hui insights or findings.

## **Who can I contact for more information?**

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the research team:

out of scope Analyst, out of scope @msd.govt.nz

Mel Pande, Manager, [Mel.Pande005@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Mel.Pande005@msd.govt.nz)