MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

MSD – services for the future



Not Government policy or advice

August 2026

Services for the future

The world is changing around us fast and will continue to do so. We need to transform so our services better support people and families into the future.

Why we're here



We're here to help New Zealanders be safe, strong, and independent.

Manaaki tangata, Manaaki whānau.

Our values

Manaaki
We care about the wellbeing and success of people.

Whānau
We are inclusive and build a sense of belonging and place.

Mahi tahi
We work together and make a difference for communities.

Tika me te pono
We do the right thing with integrity.

Our purpose, underpinned by our values, guides everything we do.

What anchors us

Te Pae Tawhiti

The long-term direction for MSD. Te Pae Tawhiti shows how we want to change to deliver better outcomes for kiwis. Te Pae Tawhiti focuses on three big ideas.

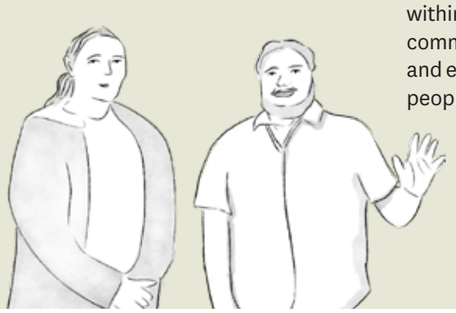
1. Mana manaaki – caring for people with dignity and respect.
2. Kotahitanga – partnering for greater impact.
3. Kia takatū tātou – being ready for what's next.

Te Pae Tawhiti shifts MSD from an organisation that largely manages transactions to one that enables people and communities, helps them move to independence, and works closely with others to make that happen.

Te Pae Tata

MSD's Māori strategy and action plan. Te Pae Tata aims to transform how MSD works with Māori, guided by kaupapa Māori values and partnership principles.

Te Pae Tata is about building capability which will encourage and support better outcomes for Māori.



Pacific Prosperity

Outlines how MSD will work with Pacific peoples and communities to improve wellbeing and opportunity. Pacific Prosperity recognises the strengths of Pacific families and aims to create more accessible, culturally grounded services that reflect Pacific values and ways of working.

Pacific Prosperity calls for building Pacific capability within MSD, supporting community leadership, and ensuring that Pacific peoples thrive.

Why we're changing

We want people to get the support they're entitled to, understand and meet their responsibilities and move into work if they can.



Needs and support

- Many more people and families now need help with housing, health, and income – all at the same time.
- People don't always understand what's expected of them or how to do the right thing.
- Some people will need support across their lifetime.
- People expect to access support outside traditional business hours.
- Complex business processes impact on the ability of our partners to deliver services and improve outcomes.
- Employers see us more as an income support service, not an employment service.



Technology

- 90% of Kiwis expect to use government services online, anytime.
- Some of our core tech is more than 30 years old.
- New technology, including self-service, can free up staff for more meaningful work.
- AI tools can increase efficiency.



Ways of working

- Staff work with lots of paper forms and deal with time consuming admin and processing.
- Māori, Pacific, and community groups know their people and expect to lead more services.



Demographics

- We're getting older. By 2040, one in four Kiwis will be over 65.
- More people need help. Benefit numbers rose by over 25% in the last five years.
- Jobs are changing faster than ever. One third of NZ workers may need new skills in the next 10 years.
- Māori represent 19.6% of New Zealand's population but 39.5% of main benefit clients.
- Pacific represent 8.9% of New Zealand population but make up 13.7% of main benefit clients.
- We're an increasingly multi-cultural society.



How services for the future operates

The transformation programme learns and improves as it goes – testing ideas, listening to people, and helping change happen.

What we'll achieve

A smarter, simpler welfare system that delivers on our mutual obligations to ensure people know what's expected of them and get the support they're entitled to, and builds stronger communities where people who can work are in work.

The big picture

MSD's services for the future programme is about making our services work more effectively for people.



Strong and resilient communities, where people who can work are in work.



Clients get the right help, faster.



Partners can deliver more easily.



Staff can focus on what matters most.

Our goals

For New Zealanders

Less benefit reliance
Fewer kids growing up in benefit-reliant homes.

Stronger whānau and communities
People who can work find jobs and keep them.

Value for money
Services that use taxpayer funds more effectively.

For clients

Get help faster
Payments and services are quicker.

Right level of support
Clients have their needs assessed to provide the right support.

Effective **support first time**
More clients can have their enquiry resolved at first point of contact.

Simpler
Clients understand what they need to do.

Less debt
Payments are correct, so people don't end up owing money.

Simple, better services
Easy to use online or in person, and to meet obligations.

Right for Māori and Pacific
Services that are responsive to people's culture and needs.

For partners

Work with MSD easily
Practices and ways of working that support our partners to work with us.

Right people for jobs
Employers get people with skills they need.

Joined up approach
MSD and partners working side by side.

Shared info that helps
Quality data so providers can focus on helping people.

Transparent, fair contracts
Fair, transparent and consistent funding models and processes.

For staff

Less administration, more people time
More time helping people and less time clicking and switching systems.

Modern tools
Modern systems that are easy to use and don't break.

Clearer ways of working
One set of consistent systems and processes, not lots of complex, different ones.





What's changing to make this real



Modernising technology

Replacing 30 year old systems with modern digital tools.

A new digital employment service. Smarter systems that reduce repetition and make it easier to do the right thing the first time.



Creating a simpler service model

People get the right help the first time without being bounced around.

A new way of working with clients.

A full view of the client wherever they interact with MSD.



Freeing up staff time

Staff can spend less time on admin and more on helping people.

Faster pathways to action for Government and other initiatives.

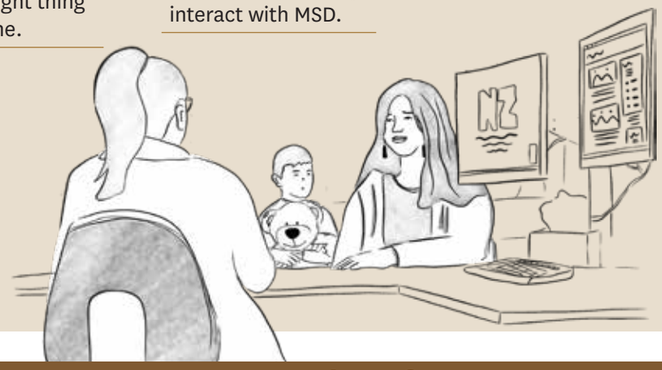


Partnering better

Reducing red tape so providers can focus on supporting communities.

Benefits directly supporting Māori communities.

Evidence based contracting grounded in what we know works best.



Our benefit targets

MSD has committed to deliver improved outcomes and savings over the next seven years.

Reduced welfare spend in long-term unemployment.	Reduced overpayments and debt.	Capacity created for frontline staff.
Reduced support and operating costs.	All-of-government contribution.	Employer and provider compliance costs.
Client experience.	Technology asset risk.	Policy implementation agility.

What's next for our people



2026

- New technology and processes to support job seekers and employers.
- Staff have quality data and insights, and can see clients who match jobs and jobs that match clients.
- New core platform, AIOS, is in place.
- New call management system for some non-client facing teams (e.g. AskHR, IT service desk, reception).



2027-28

- New tiered support model is in place for staff to give clients the right level of help based on their situation.
- New tools and practices for employment-focused case management.
- New call management technology is rolled out to all remaining teams – contact centres, centralised services etc.
- Quality data and insights about clients available on our core platform (AIOS).
- Staff can see the whole picture of the client, their situation, job search activity and how they are meeting their obligations.
- With more clients choosing self-service options, staff can increase their focus on those who need one-on-one help.
- New and improved knowledge bases are in place with contextual, timely support.



2029-30

- Enhancements to our tiered support model to support getting more people into work.
- Staff spend less time navigating systems and more time working with clients.
- Staff are supported in new ways of working.
- A catalogue of our social partners is in place to help staff find and refer clients to the right services.
- New digital channels fully rolled out and staff can access all the info they need no matter what channel the client uses or if they switch channels.
- Products and services are migrated out of CMS, our older client record system, and it's ready for decommissioning.
- We begin the migration out of SAL and SWIFTT, our older systems for students and main benefits.

2031-33

- All our products and services have been moved to new platforms by 2033.
- We have modern tools for planning and optimising our work.
- Our new systems allow the work to flow more smoothly and efficiently, supporting all aspects of how we deliver services.
- New capabilities for our payments system.
- Faster, simpler processes for managing our products and services.
- More data sharing between MSD and other government agencies like IR.
- We complete the migration out of SAL and SWIFTT, and they are decommissioned.

How we'll work together



Collaborative design and engagement

Continuing to build solutions together.



Experience-led approach

Addressing the pain points, the moments that matter, and making change tangible.



Honest conversations

Honest conversations about the challenges we must tackle.



Testing ideas together

Commitment to working with staff, clients and partners to design solutions.



Testing on the go

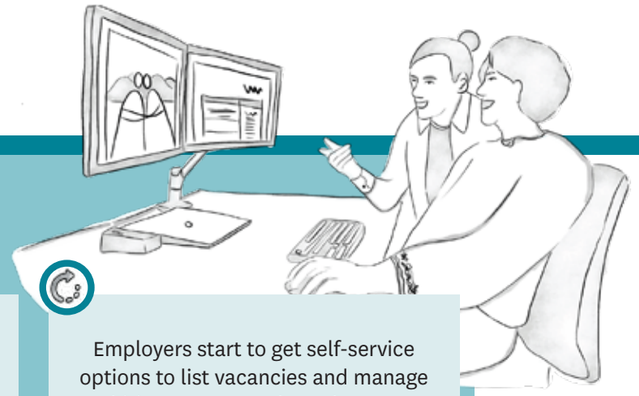
Trying things in real-world settings to see (or learn) what works best.



Ongoing communication

So people know what's happening and when.

What's next for our clients, partners and employers



2026

Clients have more ways, including a new digital channel, to get support from MSD to find employment – they can see jobs that match their skills and experience, and apply for jobs anytime.

Employers start to get self-service options to list vacancies and manage hiring processes through MSD.



2027-28

A new assessment will mean clients get the right level of support for their needs.

More help for job seekers in employment-focused case management.

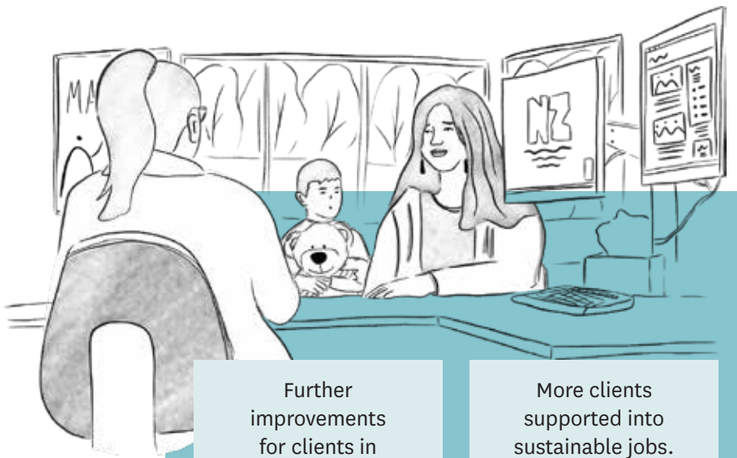
Employers can use self-service options to get great people with the right skills.

Clients know what's expected of them, meet their obligations and receive the support they're entitled to.

Shorter wait times and a greatly enhanced experience for people calling MSD thanks to our new cloud-based contact centre technology.

New contact centre technology means clients won't have to repeat themselves. MSD staff will have a full and consistent view of the client's circumstances.

More self-service options for clients getting in touch with MSD through our digital channels.



2029-30

Further improvements for clients in employment-focused case management.

More clients supported into sustainable jobs.

Experiences improve for everyone. One new system for payments, less debts for clients.

2031-33

Relevant data is shared between agencies, so more client information is up to date without the client having to let us know.

Better client services and better staff experience with more efficient and streamlined processes.

