



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

# Heartland Services & Information and Advisory Services

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The future state

July 2020

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## About this report

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This report provides an overview of the proposed principles of a future state for Heartland Services (Heartlands) and Information and Advisory Services (Information and Advice). Heartlands and Information and Advice are community-based, community-led services, providing information, advice, referral and advocacy services to rural, provincial and urban regions across Aotearoa.

In 2019, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) reviewed Heartlands and Information and Advice services (the review) to:

- clarify the need and use of the current services, and whether they are delivering services that align with the intended purpose
- develop a services strategy; identifying what is currently being delivered, the gaps in service provision, and recommendations for future services.

A report<sup>i</sup> was produced that summarises the current state of rural and urban Heartlands and Information and Advice services, including service provision, service users, and the issues and challenges providers face in delivering the services. The 'current state' report sets the foundation for opportunities to improve the existing model and should be read in conjunction with this report.

This 'future state' report is a high-level overview of the potential next steps for Heartlands and Information and Advice; focused on the second point above. It sets out the government focus on rural communities, principles of a future state and proposed operating model for how this might be achieved, and the implications for current services.

## The government focus on rural communities

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Currently, there are various programmes, initiatives and projects occurring across government to address a range of issues in rural/regional Aotearoa. The following section refers to some of the government work related to rural/regional development, however, it is not an exhaustive list. It is important that MSD is cognisant of the activities across government to ensure strategic alignment of work, where possible, for the benefit of rural communities.

### *Ministry of Social Development*

MSD is supporting the work established by the State Services Commission to have Regional Public Service Leads, who will promote the needs of regions to the wider public service and within the area, to better organise around the needs of the community. The intention is to support a culture change in the way agencies work together. The initial focus is on the social sector and strengthening connections to the skills and economic sectors.

Eleven Regional Public Service Leads have been appointed to cover fifteen agreed regions, based on regional council and unitary authority boundaries. They have each begun work in their regions, connecting with other public service leaders and local and regional networks, including the appropriate government agencies, iwi and relevant Māori advisory groups for their region. They are

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<sup>i</sup> Operational Policy and Planning (May 2020) 'Heartland Services and Information and Advisory Services – The current state.'

currently preparing what will be an annual publication of profiles and priorities for each region, with the primary purpose of improving central government agencies' connection with, and support of, regional and local priorities.

MSD's Whānau Resilience Pouwhakataki (or community connectors) are working with their local and regional communities to lead, connect and support providers to co-design services that focus on long term healing and recovery interventions; strengthening whānau to live free from violence and help communities thrive. Whānau Resilience services are being designed across the country and Pouwhakataki have the skills, credibility and a network of community connections in their regions.

### ***Ministry for Primary Industries***

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has a rural communities' portfolio, which includes implementing 'rural proofing' across government, which is to:

- build a rural lens into the full cycle of policy development, implementation and service delivery
- support strong and vibrant rural communities
- work for social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being in rural areas<sup>1</sup>.

The 'Rural Communities and Farming Support' directorate at MPI continues to be developed and key responsibilities of this team includes supporting rural communities affected by adverse events, with the inclusion of psychosocial support provision. The team is also interested in regional economic development, Māori partnerships and programmes, and dealing with the impacts of climate change. The directorate's aim is to enable and empower rural communities to become more sustainable and resilient by having regional teams who are well connected to a range of farmers and growers, industry groups, rural professionals, local government bodies, and others.

MPI is currently supporting a pilot in Tikitiki, where a collective of eight marae and hapū groups have been running a community hub to promote community aspirations. The pilot considers the use of unused buildings to deliver community, cultural and educational programmes. It is also focused on economic development opportunities for rural communities. MPI will be funding a hub co-ordinator to deliver training and wellbeing services, as well as to develop a plan for the hub's future.

### ***Department of Internal Affairs***

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) Community-led Development Programme is based on a community or hapū and the DIA signing a partnership agreement to work together. This programme uses a community-led approach to support communities, hapū and iwi to innovate and determine their own locally-driven priorities to realise sustainable community-led outcomes. Communities and hapū are supported to achieve their goals through working together, building on their strengths, encouraging wide participation, developing local leaders and action plans to measure and celebrate their achievements. The programme works with a range of regions, including rural<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment***

The \$1 billion per annum Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) was launched in 2018 by the Regional Economic Development Minister. The fund is over a three-year term to ensure that people living all over New Zealand can reach their full potential by helping to build a regional economy that is sustainable, inclusive and productive<sup>3</sup>.

Key priorities of the PGF are to enhance economic development opportunities, create sustainable jobs, enable Māori to reach their full potential, boost social inclusion and participation, build resilient communities, and help meet New Zealand's climate change targets<sup>4</sup>. The fund is also investing in digital regional hubs and the marae connectivity package, which is led by Te Puni Kōkiri. These aim to allow people to connect for business development and support through free WiFi connectivity, co-working spaces and enabling communities to seize business and education opportunities, as well as help whānau and Māori to stay connected to each other and their iwi<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally, the PGF is supporting the Rural Broadband Initiative, which aims to roll out broadband connectivity infrastructure progressively into rural Aotearoa, with the aim of increasing the availability of enhanced broadband access throughout rural parts of the country<sup>6</sup>.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is also identifying potential ways to share government workspaces as part of the government office accommodation programme. This will look at how different agencies can share spaces and includes work with DIA on technology enabled shared accommodation. Workspace sharing across regional Aotearoa will also be considered.

### ***Ministry of Health***

Rural health training hubs are being developed by the Ministry of Health. This will enable a range of medical professionals to be trained inside rural communities, which will help build communities up and encourage local connections. The expectation is that students training in rural communities will become a part of the community and stay to deliver vital services in the regions. This is to reduce the resourcing disparities between urban and rural Aotearoa<sup>7</sup>.

### ***Te Puni Kōkiri***

Through the Whānau Ora commissioning agencies Whānau Ora Kaiārahi (or Navigators) are funded to work closely with whānau to identify their specific needs and aspirations, then assist with identifying the services, education providers or employment and business opportunities that can help to meet these needs. Kaiārahi support whānau in urban, rural, and geographically remote communities across Aotearoa by planning, and then connecting whānau with the support they need to achieve their goals. They have the cultural and local knowledge necessary to understand whānau situations and build relationships of trust and confidence<sup>8</sup>.

The Whānau Ora Kaiārahi approach has been identified by the Productivity Commission as a key example of an integrated whānau-centred approach supporting seamless access to health and social services.

## **Shifting focus to a Heartlands model for rural communities**

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Heartlands was established specifically to improve access to government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) service support for people in rural areas. Information and Advice is broader in scope than Heartlands, providing information, advice, referral and advocacy services to rural, provincial and urban regions.

The government priorities of provincial growth and building resilient rural communities, and the recent review of Heartlands and Information and Advice, support a focus on improving access to services for rural communities. The Heartlands model of service has been around for two decades and designed to facilitate service access in communities with limited service provision. Heartlands already has a strategic focus on rural communities and the co-ordination function and infrastructure needed to deliver a range of services. There is an opportunity to strengthen the Heartlands model to provide improved rural community co-ordination services, whilst maintaining the focus on increasing access to government and NGO support in isolated regions.

Although Information and Advice services are valued in their communities, the limited funding, broad purpose and varied service provision impacts the ability to identify clear outcomes for 'family-support related information and advisory services'. The majority of Information and Advice services are in urban/non-rural regions where there are a range of other services/organisations that also provide support. In contrast, Heartlands provides a distinctive service that addresses needs in under-served regions and communities. The presence of Heartlands in rural areas means that service gaps can be addressed, communities have access to services they require and the need to travel significant distances is minimised. Heartlands has a clear focus and, with further development, there is an opportunity to enhance and strengthen outcomes for rural communities across Aotearoa.

## Principles of a future state

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### *Services are available and accessible to rural communities*

A key principle of the future state is that services are available and accessible to rural communities when and where they need them. This means service users can access support up to 40 hours a week and providers have capacity to be more innovative and responsive to local community needs.

To increase accessibility of services, the current barriers to engagement need to be reduced, which includes the location of services and the time and cost of travel. This could mean delivering the service from alternative site or providers, realigning or expanding services to areas without support and making improvements to technology. It could also be made easier for government, social services and service users to engage with rural communities. For example, Heartlands or rural community co-ordination sites could be located no more than one and a half hours' drive from a Work and Income site, as many Heartlands service users seek Work and Income Support. This would also limit the amount of time travelled by Work and Income case managers to rural areas, who are currently without access to this service.

### *Services are sustainably funded*

Ensuring that funding supports ongoing, sustainable service provision is a principle necessary to uphold the future state of services. Funding should be at a level that supports service provision of up to 40 hours a week and at a level that accounts for all necessary overhead costs and service components. For example, the cost of service could include adequate funding for technology needed to deliver the service, such as the cost of IT equipment, printers and computers, and include support for emergency travel for service users without means of transport, as well as for staff to attend networking and development opportunities. A functional and available site is required to deliver the service therefore, rent and operational infrastructure costs could also be considered.

Funding providers for the cost of the service would sustain service provision for rural communities, without providers needing to obtain funding from other sources including, in some cases, from their own pockets.

### ***Kanohi ki te kanohi service provision***

Engagement with the sector on Heartlands and Information and Advice reiterated the importance of services to be delivered kanohi ki te kanohi. However, this has become increasingly difficult with a move towards centralisation and digitisation of services, leading to reduced agency presence in rural areas. It is important to maintain a principle of kanohi ki te kanohi services in the future state and consider how technology can support this, without acting as a replacement. To realise this, it is vital to raise awareness of the current Heartlands sites and strengthen relationships across government, at a national and regional level, to increase the presence of other agencies in rural communities.

### ***Working in partnership***

Another principle is working in partnership between government, NGO, iwi, hapū and community agencies, as the success of the Heartlands model relies on the engagement of external support services. As the funder of Heartlands services, there is an opportunity for MSD to partner with other government agencies and the NGO sector to strengthen services available in rural areas and increase awareness of Heartlands sites as a base to deliver a broad range of services from. Partnership with iwi and hapū is also important to ensure that needs of Māori are represented and inform the location of, and strengthen connections at, Heartlands sites. A strong relationship between Work and Income and NGOs would be essential as this is one of the key services requested by Heartlands services users.

## **Proposed operating model for the future state of Heartlands**

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To apply the principles of a future state to the operating model for services, some key changes need to occur. Service provision would need to be refocused towards areas with limited service provision, namely rural areas. Services could be in locations that will ensure service use, as well as delivered by service providers that are trusted, located within rural communities and can make an impact in their regions. This also includes increasing funding and applying it sustainably; updating the branding and website and adopting new ways of working together and maintaining engagement, locally, regionally and nationally. This section details the levers of change for the new proposed operating model.

### ***Shifting focus to provide support in rural communities***

As discussed, Information and Advice has a broad scope and is located across rural, provincial and urban areas. Of the 32 Information and Advice services 20 are in urban/non-rural regions. Providers are funded nominal amounts to deliver Information and Advice so many use this funding to support or 'top up' other services, as it is not enough to deliver a service on its own. Currently, 60% of Information and Advice providers have contracts for other services with MSD or Oranga Tamariki. The remaining 40% of providers deliver services based on the primary focus and expertise of their organisation, most of which align to other services that MSD or Oranga Tamariki currently fund.



The varied nature of service provision, location of Information and Advice, limited funding and inextricable links to other service provision, makes it difficult for providers to report on outcomes and to show the value of this as a stand-alone service. It is proposed that Information and Advice services are realigned to the provider's main service specialisation to reflect how the funding is already used in practice. For some Information and Advice in rural areas, it would be worth exploring whether these providers could shift towards a Heartlands model of service delivery in the future.

### ***Improving the location of services to increase accessibility***

Other than the intention of Heartlands to be in rural areas, current service provision across the country is not based on an assessment of need or what other services may be available in the area. By mapping the current location of services against data on rural areas, current service provision could be targeted to ensure communities with the greatest need for support are receiving the services they require. Māori have not had equitable access to these services due to the current spread of the sites across the country, therefore, these services could be located in rural regions with higher Māori populations. Connections with iwi and hapū across rural Aotearoa would enable services that are fit-for-purpose for Māori in these regions.

Considering the level of deprivation across the regions, alongside isolation, would also be important to ensure that those with the highest level of needs have access to support in their regions. This assessment of need might also consider a minimum population level so that there are enough people to use the service, to support viability and ongoing sustainability.

Factors, such as existing infrastructure and provider relationships with communities, could help identify where additional rural sites are located. An area that has existing social and community infrastructure already being used by the community, such as medical centres and libraries, would support access and encourage use of the rural community co-ordination services. Similarly, identifying existing providers that have good community relationships and leveraging these to deliver the services could facilitate better access and use.

### ***A community co-ordination service that is based in NGOs***

The Heartland Services model works. The client survey conducted in 2019 indicated that, on average, 92% of service users found that Heartlands made it easier for them to access the services they need in their communities and 95% got the assistance they needed and that their needs were met. The service has been delivered since 2001 and those provided by NGOs are deemed useful, enduring and beneficial in their communities. Service users indicate that they trust NGOs. As these services adopt the community co-ordination model, it is also easier for service users to attend the premises and access a range of services.

The future operating model of rural community co-ordination needs to be focused on Heartlands service delivery from within NGOs. These services should minimise duplication of government service provisions in the same area, for example, avoiding areas with an existing Work and Income site.

Although the types of services delivered by Information and Advice providers vary, some providers in rural Aotearoa offer a community co-ordination/'one stop shop' model of service; similar to Heartlands. Therefore, some rurally-located Information and Advice providers could work towards future rural community co-ordination/Heartlands contracts. Information and Advice providers may



require capability and capacity building if they are to shift towards a Heartlands model of service delivery.

### ***Increased funding and better allocation for sustainable, full-time services***

Current funding for Heartlands and Information and Advice is not enough for sustainable service delivery. The rates and levels of funding to providers vary and are insufficient to cover the cost of the Heartlands service or for Information and Advice to be a stand-alone service. Moving towards a sustainable funding model would mean that co-ordinators could be employed full-time, premises and technology can be updated, and backfill and training can be provided for staff.

A sustainable funding model factors in reasonable direct and indirect staff costs, overheads, as well as setup and ongoing operating costs. It includes a considerable client-specific cost component as a result of clients presenting with more complex needs that require immediate attention, such as support for emergency accommodation, travel or transport costs.

A sustainable funding model will ensure appropriate distribution of funding across Aotearoa, and among providers. Moving away from volumes-based funding towards a full-time equivalent (FTE) model of funding would better reflect the way the services are being used. Work is required to move towards having a minimum of one FTE per site to deliver an available service, rather than funding for different client volumes at different rates.

The new funding model could also factor in rent or lease costs of individual providers. In the current model, MSD pays the lease costs for some providers but not others. For fairness across providers and to support the infrastructure necessary for the delivery of a rural community co-ordination service, MSD could be funding the rent or lease costs for all providers. Funding allocation would align with needs and location assessments and consider population growth and predicted need in rural communities, so that funding allows services to expand and develop where they are needed.

### ***Contract and reporting changes to support the future model***

Changes to contracts and reporting need to be made to give effect to the future model of rural community co-ordination. The service description will require updating to reflect actual or intended service delivery. Service guidelines would also need to be updated to reflect any changes to the service, such as the greater need for social service support in the regions. Longer-term contracts (minimum three years) would give greater stability for providers and agencies that need to use the Heartlands infrastructure. This would also align with MSD's strategic direction for partnering better with the NGO sector.

Consideration for how current reporting can be improved is required so that there are more useful measures in place for capturing data, and data can be used and shared in a meaningful way. Funding for technology through the future model could support providers to use tablets as a method of collecting user feedback, as an alternative to the current annual Heartlands survey approach. A feedback loop between MSD and providers could be established so that aggregated data could be shared with providers. This would inform continuous improvement and be more meaningful for both MSD and providers. This could be carried out by dedicated staff at a national level.

## ***Branding and website require a refresh***

The current Heartlands branding is dated and often confused with other Heartland/s brands. Many providers find it a burden to promote the brand in addition to their core business. The Heartlands website has limited information and is not maintained. To raise awareness of Heartlands and increase engagement from other agencies, the current branding and website require updating. The website could be a useful tool to promote new branding and other service changes, whilst functioning as a platform for access to resources and information by providers and rural communities.

## ***Technology as an addition to increasing access, not as a replacement***

Kanohi ki te kanohi service delivery is critical to the success of rural community co-ordination services. It is vital to build relationships with government agencies and NGOs to promote presence in the regions, so communities can access the support they require, when they require it. Alongside this, there could be consideration of the use of tablets or other technology for providers to trial video conferencing, whilst considering safety and security when using any new technology. Services delivered kanohi ki te kanohi should not be replaced through technological means of service delivery, however, this could be used as an option in instances where kanohi ki te kanohi support cannot be provided physically.

## ***Professional networks to support continued engagement***

To reduce the professional isolation experienced by providers and support continued engagement, Heartlands co-ordinator hui could be re-established to enable networking and development opportunities. An online platform could also support co-ordinators to stay connected and share methods of practice.

## **Implications of the proposed model**

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### ***Funding for under-served rural communities***

Through Budget 2020, an investment of \$19.8 million over four years (see **Figure 1.**) was made for under-served rural and provincial communities to increase accessibility to government and non-government services, based on the Heartlands model. This investment seeks to address the cost and demand pressures faced by Heartlands and Information and Advice service providers.

<b>Service type</b>	<b>Funding type</b>	<b>20/21 (\$m)</b>	<b>21/22 (\$m)</b>	<b>22/23 (\$m)</b>	<b>23/24 (\$m)</b>	<b>4-year total (\$m)</b>
<b>Heartland Service &amp; Information and Advisory Service</b>	Service delivery	1.728	3.046	6.722	6.722	18.218
	Design, implementation and evaluation	0.35	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.55
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.078</b>	<b>3.446</b>	<b>7.122</b>	<b>7.122</b>	<b>19.768</b>

**Figure 1. Funding for Heartlands and Information and Advice**

The funding will enable the proposed new operating model for rural community co-ordination services. Clients in rural and provincial communities often have limited access to a broad range of government and non-government services and support, which is addressed by Heartlands and some rurally located Information and Advice services.

Funding levels for Heartlands and Information and Advice has been insufficient and many providers have had to subsidise service provision through other measures. This additional investment will ensure that these services no longer operate on limited funding. With the increase in funding, the availability and quality of services offered at the current sites can be strengthened and reimaged to deliver fit-for-purpose services for rural communities. This will also create further opportunities to engage with government and non-government agencies to enable service provision and availability in the regions as well as address the current limited opening hours and underinvestment in premises and technology.

### ***Funding to providers is based on an informed costing and allocation model***

The implementation of the proposed operating model will include a robust costing and allocation model. Cost and allocation will be informed by the actual cost of ongoing sustainable services, average rent cost by region, needs assessment and location of services (current and future based on predicted need). It will also replace volumes-based funding with an FTE model so that funding is based on a full-time available service in each community.

An implementation plan will detail the impact on individual providers as a result of applying the new funding and allocation model. It will also identify areas across Aotearoa where there are current gaps in service provision to inform decisions on where to increase and expand the Heartlands model of service.

### ***Refocusing the services***

Focusing on service provision in rural communities and the Heartlands model may mean a shift in current contracting and funding. Work with Information and Advice and Heartlands providers in non-rural areas would be carried out to address or reconcile their position within the new operating model, whilst enabling their services to continue to support their communities. This may include realignment of funding to relevant alternative service types or with services already being delivered by those providers through contracts with MSD or Oranga Tamariki.

For some Information and Advice services in rural areas, work would be carried out with providers to identify whether they may be suitable for a shift to Heartlands as some are already considered to be delivering services in a similar model. Realigning services would enable clarity for providers and MSD about how funding should be used. It would also mean that MSD no longer funds a specific Information and Advice service.

As the new operating model focuses on an NGO-based Heartlands, work with the services currently delivered from Work and Income sites, or from the District Court Hearing Centre will be carried out to explore their position within the new model. This will take into consideration the co-ordinator positions, the location and the requirement to continue service delivery so as not to affect local community access to services they require.

### ***Service development with providers and key stakeholders***

The review of Heartlands and Information and Advice services has identified a range of requirements in rural communities to ensure successful service provision. To build on the sector's feedback on their unique regional needs, key stakeholders will need to be engaged in a design/service strengthening phase. This will include work with providers and regional representatives on service development and improvement to address key issues relating to access to services, including travel and transport, technology, and social isolation/deprivation. These services have the potential to support economic activity and growth in the regions, such as through connecting job-seekers with local businesses, therefore, engagement with the employment sector will be necessary as part of the design/service strengthening phase. Other key stakeholders include working internal MSD teams, such as Service Delivery and Property, and a range of government agencies and peak bodies.

### **Making the future state a reality**

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This report has identified the principles and direction for a future operating model to address the issues and challenges identified with the current state of Heartlands and Information and Advice services. The next step is to make this future state a reality by developing an implementation plan to allocate the investment through Budget 2020 and undertaking service development with providers and key stakeholders to identify the requirements of optimal community co-ordination services in rural regions across Aotearoa.

## References

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