

About us

We work on challenging social-sector problems to improve people's lives.

Who we are

The Social Wellbeing Agency Toi Hau Tāngata works on challenging social-sector problems to improve people's lives. We focus our efforts on where we can make the greatest impact to lead and shine a light on policy issues that affect the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

We are a multi-disciplinary team comprising data scientists, business and data analysts, policy thinkers, researchers, evaluators and communicators. We collaborate across the system advising on policy issues that fall between the gaps. Ultimately, we want our approaches to achieve sustainable improvements for the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

As a Government agency, we deliver advanced data analytics and insights in a cost-effective way, thus ensuring that we re-invest in system infrastructure and tools that will benefit the public service in the long term. You can read our 2021-2023 Strategy [here](#).

Our name

Our name Toi Hau Tāngata signifies the valuable aspects of living life – manifesting in the wellbeing of the people. The individual words have many meanings, including: Toi - peak, Hau - vital essence and Tāngata - humankind.

Mohi Apou of Taranaki-Whanganui descent gifted the name to us. Toi Hau Tāngata comes from a karakia unique to Taranaki-Whanganui Iwi, 'Te Hau Tai Tāngata' – the principles influencing the creation of mankind. The karakia is not written but passed from one generation to the next as the taonga tuku iho, or oral tradition. Our reo Māori name aligns with our vision that 'People, whānau and communities live the life to which they aspire'.

How we do what we do

We use a broad and inclusive set of wellbeing measures that tell us whether people are leading full, meaningful lives. We create tools and practices to target gaps in the social sector’s knowledge. We partner with the social sector, combining science, data and lived experience to draw insights that are enriched by whānau voices.

Who we’re working with and for

We support the sector’s capability to utilise insights by creating tools and practices that stimulate innovation. And we work with decision-makers to take insights and apply them.

We report to the Minister for Social Development and Employment – [Hon Carmel Sepuloni](#) – who agrees the Agency’s work programme in consultation with the Social Wellbeing Board of social sector chief executives.



Learn what a social wellbeing approach looks like in practice. Read our case study [Towards better social sector decision making and practice: a social wellbeing approach \[PDF, 2.2 MB\]](#).

Our history

Formerly the Social Investment Agency, we became the Social Wellbeing Agency on 19 March 2020. Read the Minister’s [press release](#) .

We are a Departmental Agency hosted within Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission.