



Te Puni Kōkiri
MINISTRY OF MĀORI DEVELOPMENT

Case Study:

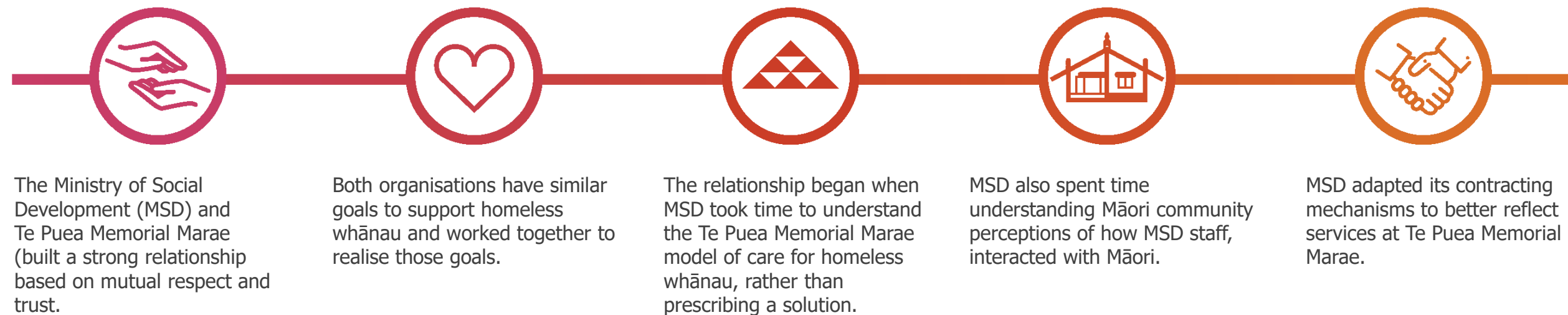
Working with Te Puea Memorial Marae – to support homeless whānau

This case study is one of a series which highlight how government agencies are developing good practice in working effectively with and for Māori. These are a resource for government agencies to learn from and strengthen their effectiveness for Māori.

More case studies are available from www.tpk.govt.nz.



Why did this relationship work for Māori?



Case study overview

This case study highlights a relationship that began between Te Puea Memorial Marae and the MSD Auckland regional office in the effort to combat homelessness in Auckland. This case study is based on interviews with both organisations to capture the lessons learned.

Te Puea Memorial Marae is an urban marae in Mangere. It is named in honour of Te Puea Hērangi C.B.E., a member of the Kingitanga family, she was recognised for her fight against poverty and powerlessness. The marae has continued her legacy in caring for tangata and getting this mahi done, since it opened in 1965.

In 2016, a homelessness crisis in Auckland saw the marae open its doors to the urgent needs of homeless whānau/whānau kāinga kore. In two months

over 180 people came to the marae for help. Te Puea Memorial Marae developed a marae-based, wraparound whānau-centred programme, Manaaki Tangata, (which ran from June - September 2016) to place whānau into homes and help get their lives back on track. The programme blends both Māori tikanga (lore) with government systems and requirements (law) into seamless practice. A significant aspect of its success is ensuring:

“the practice of care is governed by uniquely Māori cultural concepts of manaaki/support, aroha/love, whakapapa/genealogy and whānaungatanga/relationships.”¹

Te Puea Memorial Marae has since built strong relationships with a range of government agencies, including MSD, which are now co-located at the marae. Marae Chair, Hurimoana Dennis said the Manaaki Tangata Programme has set a benchmark in,

“practicing a model that blends the law and lore to service the urgent and long-term needs of Whānau Kāinga Kore.”²

Since 2017, Te Puea Memorial Marae implemented Manaaki Tangata e Rua which still operates helping whānau and single parents into housing and providing wrap around support. Since 2016, over 50 whānau have been assisted/moved into affordable accommodation under manaaki Tangata e Rua programme.

¹ Hurimoana Dennis, (2019) Aue te Mamae: Exploring Te Puea Memorial Marae's 'Te Manaaki Tangata Programme', as an indigenous response to homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. Master of Applied Practice (Social Practice), Unitec Institute of Technology, p.4.

² Dennis, ibid, p5.



Exploring how to support Te Puea Memorial Marae rather than prescribing solutions

Te Puea Memorial Marae approached MSD for support in 2016 asking for a case manager to be based on the marae. At first, MSD wanted to provide housing support from its local offices. Following insistence from Te Puea Memorial Marae that MSD should be located at the marae, MSD eventually agreed and shifted from providing only office-based services to exploring how co-location might work. A staff member was located on-site at the marae to see how MSD could provide support. MSD said the staff arrived with no preconceived ideas or expectations, and to learn about the Te Puea Memorial Marae model of care. *"We were just here, watching how everyone was working... and I was absolutely floored, I thought 'wow', this is why I do what I do."*

This was the start of the shift to MSD being co-located on marae alongside kaimahi (employees). Having the case manager on site provides real time support and an understanding of the complexity of whānau issues. The relationship has continued to develop over time. There was also an opportunity to better understand how the two organisations could work together, *"in our structural government world and in a Māori world."*

This included developing a mutual understanding about different operating styles and government agency restrictions. Both Te Puea Memorial Marae and MSD now understand that their intentions to improve outcomes for Māori are similar but that there were different ways to achieve this outcome.

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MSD staff member

It was a rocky start, we (MSD) were pushing back saying, no we don't need to have anybody up there, we can do that job back at the office. When in fact it wasn't about us being able to do the job, we could do the job anywhere. But they wanted the presence so that if a particular social worker had a case, and they needed a quick answer, they could walk down the office.

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MSD staff member

Reading reports from Te Puea Memorial Marae about some of the families that turn up there, what their lives are like at the beginning compared to further down when they are getting into their own house and employment, we want to be there to support their journey.” MSD staff member.

Te Puea Memorial Marae developed a model to meet the needs of homeless whānau

When it first opened its doors to homeless people, Te Puea Memorial Marae developed its Manaaki Tangata Programme,³ a whānau-centred model of wraparound service delivery to support homeless whānau coming to the marae. In 2019 it had placed 417 people into secure houses and helped them get their lives back on track.⁴

In 2017, this programme was changed to Manaaki Tangata E Rua, which has seen Te Puea Memorial Marae focusing their support towards whānau and single parents, rather than all homeless people. The programme provides comprehensive support to whānau in many areas, including housing. The marae chair says finding the house is the easy part. MSD formally refers whānau to the Manaaki Tangata E Rua programme from emergency accommodation. Te Puea Memorial Marae then works with these whānau supporting them into homes and for some time afterwards to ensure they successfully settle.

In 2019, Te Puea Memorial Marae also developed wānanga pūrākau training sessions, for frontline MSD case managers, to build and strengthen their engagement practices with Māori. The first wānanga targeted senior case managers sending them to local iwi, hapū and Māori providers. This, according to the marae chair, meant MSD staff could see how providers engaged with Māori. Feedback from providers and MSD has been *"positive, citing examples of changed customer service behaviour at the office and professionally"*.

³ The Manaaki Tangata Programme was instigated at the start of the homelessness crisis in Auckland from June 2016 to September 2016. Te Puea Board of Trustees and Marae Komiti launched Manaaki Tangata E Rua in 2017 to meet the continued need of homeless whānau in Auckland. This model is still in operation today.

⁴ Dennis, *ibid*, p.45.

Senior leadership buy-in and organisational support was critical

MSD management was flexible in its approach, from the beginning, and kept the big picture in mind while working with Te Puea Memorial Marae to build an effective relationship and help the homeless. The full support of MSD's Auckland senior management was critical to making this partnership work. The Auckland Regional Commissioner was flexible in his approach and explored different ways of working and built the relationship with the marae.

Te Puea Memorial Marae has extended the co-location model to other agencies including Kainga Ora but kept at its core the concept of a wraparound service for whānau at the marae. MSD has taken the learnings from its approach at Te Puea Memorial Marae and expanded the co-location model to other Auckland marae. There are now 501 co-located sites in the Auckland region. The approach for each marae is tailored and is very much based on a joint conversation about what each community needs. This might mean supporting rangatahi into employment or supporting young mothers. An MSD staff member said the co-location model was evolutionary with the dialogue being open and ongoing about the needs in each place. Co-location is now at Te Whānau o Waipareira, Ngāti Whātua ki Orakei, Manurewa Marae, Turuki Healthcare, Manukau Urban Maori Authority, Papakura Marae and Huakina Development Trust.

A Te Puea Memorial Marae-led Taumata Kōrero governance group between Auckland-based marae and senior management is now in place. According to the marae chair, the Taumata Kōrero was a response to two issues, enabling Regional Commissioner level Māori engagement across the region with significant and respected Māori providers and setting a region-wide agenda that has so far pushed out on co-locations, the wānanga pūrākau and disrupting intergenerational welfare dependency.

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Te Puea kaimahi

[Mark Goldsmith] came and saw us and introduced himself. He's gone to many providers; he's coming and talking to each of us. He is just listening. He takes it back to the office.

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MSD staff member

We are often trying to fit a square into a circle, often use government roles etc but they don't have the administration machine behind them. We developed something that was new to me, a new type of model. We worked together to develop the contract to the satisfaction of both parties.

A continued active relationship

MSD staff said it has an active relationship with Te Puea Memorial Marae that has gone from strength-to-strength, built on trust and regular communication. "It is a partnership first, contracts come second, we have an important understanding of each other." It took MSD at least a year and a half to really understand what Te Puea Memorial Marae did and develop a contract recognising this. *"What they do does not fit into a traditional contract that we have."*

An MSD staff member noted that the relationship was confronting at times. By working at the marae, MSD gained a better understanding of how it was perceived in the community and acknowledged some of its services were not effective for Māori. As one MSD staff member said:

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there's been a few times I've been praised in one area and roasted in another, so you've got to take the good with the bad and it's not rosy all the way through but hei aha, that's the way it is.

The words of a Te Puea Memorial Marae kaimahi illustrates the strength of the relationship: *"Without them, we were on dial up speed, with them here, we are on optic, ultimate fibre".*

Te Puea Memorial Marae chair said that the relationship with MSD was now strong. This was illustrated by a co-located staff member, who said that they work for both MSD and the marae: *"I'm stuck in the middle, and I love it, because they are like whānau".*

Māori need targeted approaches

MSD learnt through its partnership with Te Puea Memorial Marae that there was value in using different approaches to meet the needs of its Māori clients. MSD also saw evidence of Manaaki Tangata E Rua making inroads with whānau, that an office-based service could not provide. MSD acknowledges that the marae environment and the collective nature of Manaaki Tangata E Rua programme, wrapping support around the whole whānau, makes it a more effective approach for those whānau who use it. Whānau at the marae have told case managers that they can breathe at the marae, they would never go into an office but know the marae can help them. *"It's not just help to see MSD, it's help with budgeting, food banks, social workers, they get the whole thing under one roof."*

An MSD case manager spoke about the visual barriers of an office environment, case manager time constraints and not having access to specialists who could help whānau.

“MSD are fighting a battle there because of the visual issues that whānau have, you go to the office and what do you get . . . always up against those visual barriers, you can change the way that you deal with whānau in an office, to be honest the damage is done as soon as the person is walking in.

For MSD case managers, being based on the marae, meant being able to see what is going on for the individual, their whānau and being able to spend more time with people, which leads to better results.

Pip Lototau, MSD Manager, based at Te Puea Memorial Marae



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MSD case manager

Being on the marae, we can get a full picture. So that's how a case manager manages to embrace the whole whānau concept, we can have in-depth interactions with clients, whānau.

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MSD staff member

If we really want to have significantly better outcomes for Māori, we need to work with Māori because they have the answers.

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MSD staff member

With a person in half an hour? In an office environment, when you are asking questions, it can be quite confrontational, without knowing it, because you are trying to get to the next person who is waiting so it's a very quick conversation. To be honest, can you build rapport

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MSD staff member

We want te ao Māori to permeate into our offices, but we will never have te ao Māori tikanga at a marae level, [that's] quite hard. That's the fundamental difference, by Māori for Māori under Māori lore but still adhering to the law. That's the tension sometimes, being able to ride the lightning between lore and ensure that government law is being administered fairly.



A model of Māori tikanga and New Zealand law co-existing

Hurimoana Dennis (Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu) is the Kaitiaki Mātua at Te Puea Memorial Marae



The work of Te Puea Memorial Marae is seen by MSD as pioneering and was a catalyst for action. It is focused on helping Māori on a marae where tikanga is key to its operation. An MSD interviewee said that understanding of Māori tikanga plays a huge part in how the marae operates,

“that underpins everything that they do there so for me, that’s the defining difference about how we operate our service and how a service on a marae can operate because it is tikanga based.

For the marae chair, a key part of Manaaki Tangata E Rua is the co-existence of the concepts of Māori tikanga (lore) with government systems and practices (law) into one seamless practice to efficiently meet the urgent and long-term ongoing needs of homeless whānau.⁵ Interviewees agreed that the coexistence of these concepts was part of the success at Te Puea Memorial Marae. Both aspects work harmoniously together, with MSD staff engaged in the daily functions of the marae alongside their core role. An MSD staff member gave an example of sitting on the paepae if there were not enough tangata whenua, or home people: “Our work isn’t just MSD, it’s about integrating into Māori tikanga, into what is required for Māori here at the marae”. The marae chair said:

“personalities, respect and communication are an ongoing part of the engagement process for co-located staff.

Engagement between these two concepts is integral to the marae’s service delivery model.

An MSD interviewee said they were fortunate to work with the Te Puea Memorial Marae chair from the outset. He had worked in government and understood agency processes. “He knows some of the structural stuff, knows it makes it hard even though intentions are good.”

Kaimahi at Te Puea Memorial Marae emphasised the marae chair as one of the reasons for the success of this model because he walks in both worlds.

⁵ Dennis, *ibid*, p.25.

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MSD staff member

Māori tikanga plays a huge part in how they operate on the marae, that underpins everything that they do... that’s the defining difference about how we operate our service and how a service on a marae can operate because it is tikanga-based.

Key outcomes from this case study

What started out as MSD case managers being co-located at Te Puea Memorial Marae has grown into an approach used across seven marae and with Māori organisations in the Auckland region. MSD has acknowledged that having case managers working alongside marae kaimahi is helping to achieve better outcomes for Māori. Initial support provided to homeless whānau, has expanded beyond housing to include finding jobs, working with rangatahi and other marae-based programmes. Co-located case managers are now in high demand to work on marae in the region.

The relationship between Te Puea Memorial Marae and MSD has continued to develop. A Taumata Kōrero governance group has been set up focused on solving systemic issues for homeless whānau and other MSD clients. According to MSD staff in Auckland, learnings from having a relationship with marae shouldn’t be underestimated. MSD now has a better understanding of the need to form relationships with Māori organisations, to understand the needs of the community, and te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. These partnerships embody the guiding principles of Te Pae Tata, MSD Māori Strategy and Action Plan.⁶

6. For more information about Te Pae Tata, go to MSD, <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/strategies/te-pae-tata/index.html>

What can agencies do to develop good practices working with Māori?



Literature referred to in this case study

1 Hurimoana Dennis, (2019) Aue te Mamae: Exploring Te Puea Memorial Marae's 'Te Manaaki Tangata Programme', as an indigenous response to homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. Master of Applied Practice (Social Practice), Unitec Institute of Technology.

2 WAI 2750, B014, Signed brief of evidence of Hurimoana Hui Dennis, 9 February 2021.