

# Evaluation of the Improving Māori Input into Local Board Decision-Making Initiative

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July 2021

Technical Report 2021/17





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ISSN 2230-4525 (Print)  
ISSN 2230-4533 (Online)

ISBN 978-1-99-100268-6 (Print)  
ISBN 978-1-99-100269-3 (PDF)

This report has been peer reviewed by Auckland Council's Peer Review Panel.
Review completed on 28 July 2021
<p>Approved for Auckland Council publication by:</p> <p>Eva McLaren Manager, Research and Evaluation (RIMU)</p> <p>Louise Mason Manager, Local Board Services</p>
Date: 28 July 2021

## Recommended citation

Otter, J., S Tongatule and A Reid (2021). Evaluation of the improving Māori input into local board decision-making initiative. Auckland Council technical report, TR2021/17

Cover image credit: photograph taken at mana whenua and local boards hui at Ngāti Ōtara Marae in January 2020. [Mana Whenua Hui Jan 2020 – YouTube](#).

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# Executive summary

## Background

The *Improving Māori input into local board decision-making initiative* (IMI) was initiated in 2015 by Auckland Council's Local Board Services department, in recognition that improvements needed to be made to ensure that local boards were meeting their specific obligations under the Local Government Act 2002, and to enhance partnerships and relationships between Māori and local boards.

The initiative brought together representatives from four southern local boards and 13 mana whenua entities with interests in those local board areas. At the outset of IMI, participants co-designed eight actions that aimed to provide direction and impetus, and which continue to inform its work programme. For the purpose of this evaluation these were grouped into three areas: training, whakawhanaungatanga (relationships), and shared decision-making.

Governance of the initiative is provided by a Project Reference Group (PRG) and the actions delivered by the Project Delivery Group (PDG). An external organisation, Ōtara Health, provides IMI's secretarial and facilitation functions.

No specific evaluation or monitoring framework was developed at the start of the initiative. However, in late 2020 the PRG requested that an evaluation be undertaken. Members of Auckland Council's Local Board Services worked with researchers from the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) to identify the following evaluation objectives:

- to explore whether the initiative has met its original objective and goals
- to understand the effectiveness of the initiative governance and delivery
- to identify whether any improvements can be made to the initiative to make it more effective.

Data for this evaluation has been collected through a literature scan of IMI documentation and interviews with IMI members.

## Findings related to the actions

IMI has had mixed success at achieving the eight founding actions, determined by the participants at the beginning of the initiative.

The achievement of actions pertaining to **training** appear to have been challenging. Training was intended to focus on local board members, supporting them to have greater capacity for engaging effectively with mana whenua. Work towards these actions was undertaken initially, however changes in personnel at mana whenua organisations meant impetus was lost and the work was not completed. The views of local board members on training were mixed. Some expressed that training southern mana whenua was achieved through the whakawhanaungatanga actions and in participation over time, while others felt Auckland Council needed to provide more training support to local board members, especially te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. The role of IMI in meeting these needs was unclear.

There was recognition of the missed opportunity caused by the incomplete training activities among mana whenua representatives, but they also identified limitations in their capacity to deliver. Some we spoke to questioned if Auckland Council could be playing more of a role in preparing local board members for engaging with mana whenua.

There was a recognition among participants that relationship-building between local board members and mana whenua did help generate the opportunities for training and decision-making.

Auckland Council staff were able to identify particular projects that could be attributed to IMI and which delivered the **whakawhanaungatanga** actions. However, as whakawhanaungatanga for IMI is about the quality of relationships between mana whenua and local board members, as much as particular events, it is apparent that IMI's contribution to improved relationships was mixed.

Some local board members felt that the purpose of the PRG meetings were unclear, and they were not sure how it should fit in with their local board work. Mana whenua representatives welcomed the opportunity for whakawhanaungatanga but questioned what benefits they stood to gain from the relationship-building exercises.

The achievement of the actions based around notions of **shared decision-making** was challenging to analyse. These actions had aspirational dimensions that aimed to get PRG members talking and thinking creatively about the opportunities they embody, as it was recognised that some, such as creating Māori seats on local boards was not possible under current legislation.

The evaluation found a variety of perspectives on whether these actions were being met. Among Auckland Council staff, there was a tendency to approach the decision-making actions as technical issues, and people identified reasons why they are challenging to implement. Local board members gave mixed feedback. Some recognised the benefits that mana whenua engagement could give to their local boards, while others expressed more narrow views on the benefits of shared decision-making with mana whenua. Such views stand in contrast to the mana whenua expectation about how shared decision-making could be approached. They were aware of the limitations within local board decision-making processes but wanted Auckland Council staff and local board members to think creatively. This mismatch in expectations and aspirations for these actions may have limited the opportunity for IMI to generate the kind of relationships mana whenua were seeking, and which informed their initial enthusiasm for joining IMI.

## Effectiveness of IMI

An important element to the evaluation was to identify what had been effective about IMI, and what could be improved.

Some mana whenua representatives considered IMI was no longer meeting their aspirations. This could be because they did not think the people around the table understood their issues enough, or because they considered that local board decision-making did not give them the right level of engagement on key issues.

This has generated flow-on effects, with limited mana whenua attendance leaving other participants unsure of the group's legitimacy, a level of disconnection between the PRG and the PDG, and with

individual council staff having to work out how IMI related to their own local board requirements for mana whenua engagement.

There was divergence in Auckland Council participants understanding of what IMI was and how it was structured. For example, none of the local board members interviewed knew of the PDG, while many PDG members had only cursory knowledge of the existence of the PRG. PDG members also described it being quite challenging to understand what the function of IMI is, and were unsure whether their delivery of the actions was in line with the expectations of the PRG. When projects did successfully deliver on actions, council staff often considered this to be because of the strength of personal relationships rather than anything specifically enabling about IMI.

Similarly, for local board members, individual relationships with mana whenua representatives often stand in for the kinds of systematic changes IMI was seeking, with concerns raised about what were to happen should they leave their position. Relationships internal to IMI were also a key part of this theme. Staff discussed the challenges of understanding the different needs and expectations of Local Board Services and the Community Empowerment Unit from IMI. There was also confusion about groups from outside of IMI using the forum for their own engagement.

### **Role of Ōtara Health**

The final theme from the interviews is about the facilitation of IMI, with responses focussing on the secretarial and facilitation functions. Currently, these functions are contracted to Ōtara Health Charitable Trust ('Ōtara Health'), an external organisation which has performed this role since the founding of IMI in 2015.

Some council and mana whenua participants considered that Ōtara Health were doing a good job in challenging circumstances, but many thought there was room for improvement. A representative from the organisation referred to their current state of facilitation as 'going with the fire'. This means that when facilitating IMI, they seek to go where there is energy and enthusiasm and build upon this. They recognised IMI was not a typical council initiative and that it required council staff and local board members to think creatively about the contribution of mana whenua to their work. This was consistent with IMI's founding discussions and the ways mana whenua thought about IMI.

Some IMI participants wanted to see more leadership from Ōtara Health in setting the direction for IMI. Other IMI participants did not appreciate that this approach required them to become more active within IMI, especially if they were new to the group. This led to perceptions that Ōtara Health's role was strictly administrative, and questions as to why this work should not be brought 'in house'. Relatedly, there was also a perception expressed by some that PDG meetings could be repetitive, going over the actions without direction or guidance from the facilitators.

### **Recommendations**

Four recommendations are presented in this report. In brief, these are:

- Local Board Services to ensure a forum is provided for mana whenua and local boards to discuss whether IMI is fit for purpose and is generating outcomes consistent with their strategies and plans.
- The Project Reference Group (PRG) to refresh the relationships and thinking informing IMI.

- The PRG to generate mechanisms for ensuring oversight and accountability for IMI initiatives.
- The PRG and Local Board Services to discuss how IMI should be adequately resourced and managed.



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## 1.0 Introduction

The *Improving Māori input into local board decision-making initiative* (IMI) was established in 2015 by Auckland Council's Local Board Services department, in recognition that improvements needed to be made to ensure that local boards were meeting their specific obligations under the Local Government Act 2002. Those relate to the obligation of councils to establish, maintain, and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making.

The initiative brought together representatives from four southern local boards and 13 mana whenua entities with interests in those local board areas. As the name suggests, the aim of IMI is to enhance Māori influence in local board decision-making based around a rangatira ki te rangatira (chief to chief) approach.

The founding local boards are Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Manurewa and Papakura, and the founding mana whenua entities are:

- Ngā Mana Whenua i Tāmaki Makaurau
- Ngāti Tamaoho
- Waikato-Tainui
- Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki
- Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua
- Te Ahiwaru
- Ngāti Maru
- Ngāti Whanaunga
- Te Ākitai
- Ngāti Pāoa
- Ngāti Whātua
- Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
- Te Kawerau a Maki.

The Franklin Local Board has also joined the initiative, and Howick, Maungakiekie-Tāmaki and Puketāpapa local boards have attended some hui associated with this initiative.

Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) is supporting Local Board Services with an evaluation of the initiative. This report presents the findings from the evaluation and presents recommendations.

## 1.1 Background

### 1.1.1 Development of the initiative

Following the amalgamation of local government in Tāmaki Makaurau in 2010, which resulted in the formation of a unitary authority (Auckland Council, Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau), and 21 local boards, previously well-established relationships with mana whenua in legacy

council areas were disrupted. Local government relationships with mana whenua in the Manukau City Council jurisdiction had been particularly strong before amalgamation, however, after a few years some relationships had diminished in the absence of no clear path for re-establishing new ones.

In 2014, the Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Manurewa and Papakura local boards invited a small working group consisting of mana whenua representatives and non-mana whenua Māori (mataawaka) to work on the matter of how to 'improve Māori input into local board decision-making'. The outcome of that was a submission made to Local Board Services requesting that mana whenua and local boards work together on the initiative. It was agreed that a first step would be to identify the purpose and benefits for Māori, as well as the wider constituency, of such an initiative.<sup>1</sup>

A joint initiative commenced in 2015 and a working group was established made up of mana whenua and local board services. Twelve three-hour hui were convened by Ōtara Health Charitable Trust (a social service provider in south Auckland) ('Ōtara Health') over a 12-month period, that explored and identified shared purpose and desired outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

A key output of the hui was a shared overall population outcome that:

*All Māori in Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Manurewa and Papakura are healthy, well, thriving and fulfilled spiritually, mentally, culturally and physically.*

Another key output was the development of eight co-designed actions aimed at improving Māori input into local board decision-making, as outlined below:

1. Provide a representative mana whenua body for local boards to engage directly with at a local board governance level.
2. Council staff and mana whenua to design and deliver Te Ao Māori 101 training for local board members.
3. Initiate Te Ao Māori 101 training as a prerequisite to standing for election – for all local board candidates.
4. Mana whenua design and develop a toolbox resource, delivered by them to support Te Ao Māori 101 training, and to serve also as a practical resource for local board members throughout their term.
5. Invite and encourage mana whenua attendance and participation in local board workshops, to enable genuine collaboration and partnership on matters of common interest.
6. Include Māori (mana whenua) seat(s) in the composition of local boards, in order to encourage more Māori to vote and participate in the election process.

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<sup>1</sup> Coffey, J. (2016) *Improving Māori Input into local board Decision-Making*. Ōtara Health Charitable Trust. Unpublished, report available

[https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2016/09/OP\\_20160919\\_AGN\\_5627\\_AT\\_files/OP\\_20160919\\_AGN\\_5627\\_AT\\_Attachment\\_49598\\_1.PDF](https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2016/09/OP_20160919_AGN_5627_AT_files/OP_20160919_AGN_5627_AT_Attachment_49598_1.PDF)

<sup>2</sup> For more detail on the discussion and outcomes of the hui, including the application of Twyford's Power of Co Framework, please refer to the report above.

7. Convene a formal face-to-face hui between local board members and mana whenua at marae in their areas, at the start of each new board term (i.e. soon after members are elected). This is in order for both parties to set and agree expectations, and exchange statements of intent, at the same time identifying common ground and opportunities for ongoing collaborative support and partnership over the next three-year term.
8. Invite and encourage local board member attendance and participation in Mana Whenua Hui, to enable genuine collaboration and partnership on matters of common interest.

The recommended actions were accepted by the representatives of the Improving Māori Input into Local Board Decision-Making working group of mana whenua and local boards on 18 July 2016, and the initiative was then formally established.

### **1.1.2 IMI governance and structure**

IMI was initially a single group that comprised mana whenua representatives, mataawaka representatives, local board elected representatives and Auckland Council staff. Following early discussion, it was decided that the focus should be first on the relationship between mana whenua and elected members first and include mataawaka later.

A Project Reference Group (PRG) was established in 2017 (see PRG Terms of Reference in Appendix A), and a Project Delivery Group (PDG) was established in 2018 (Terms of Reference are in Appendix B). The PRG is the original IMI group and is comprised of mana whenua representatives and representatives from the participating local boards.

The PRG holds the rangatira ki te rangatira function of IMI, sets the overall direction and generates activities consistent with the actions. The PDG consists of Auckland Council staff and some mana whenua representatives who operationalise the directions and ideas set by the PRG. It was established after the initiative had been going for a couple of years, as IMI recognised that it needed support for projects that could deliver on the actions.

Support is provided by Ōtara Health, who are contracted by the founding local boards (the contract is managed by Auckland Council's Community Empowerment Unit (CEU)). The PRG and PDG meetings are facilitated and chaired by Ōtara Health, who are also responsible for coordination between the two groups.

Since the development of IMI there has been one local government election, in late 2019.

The PRG and the PDG meet regularly. Monthly PRG meetings are held at Manukau Civic Centre and PDG meetings are held at either the Ōtara Health offices or at Ngāti Tamaoho offices in Ōtara.

In September 2020 the PRG undertook their own assessment of progress towards the eight actions, and expanded those into a work programme, which is currently the basis of the initiative. Refer to Appendix C.

## 1.2 This evaluation and report

An evaluation of the initiative was requested by the PRG at its meeting on 22 September 2020.

In response, Local Board Services approached Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), and a project plan, steering group and a small research team was established. The Steering Group consisted of senior Auckland Council staff from Local Board Services, Community Empowerment Unit and RIMU. The authors of this report are the research team.

In the absence of any clear evaluation questions or measures in the establishment of IMI, the initial step in the process was for RIMU to work with Local Board Services to clarify the evaluation objectives. It was agreed that the objectives are to understand:

- whether the initiative has met its original objective and goals
- the effectiveness of the initiative governance and delivery
- whether any improvements can be made to the initiative to make it more effective.

### 1.2.1 Research method

The research method included a review of available relevant documentation, and interviews with participants. Interviews were semi-structured and were based on the evaluation objectives (Appendix D).

A list of 49 possible participants was provided to the researchers by Local Board Services. All were then contacted and invited to participate. A total of 17 people were interviewed, either face-to-face or online via MS Teams and Skype. Participants were drawn from the PRG, the PDG, and Ōtara Health. It may be that the low response rate is a reflection of engagement with the initiative in general, an issue discussed further below.

Most interviews were one to one with the researchers, however, two interviews with Auckland Council staff and one interview with mana whenua included two participants rather than only one.

#### Completed interviews

Affiliation	Number of participants
Auckland Council staff	8
Mana whenua	5
Local board members	3
Ōtara Health	1

All mana whenua with interests in IMI were approached to participate in interviews, however, not all mana whenua participants had been involved with the initiative from the start. In addition, three of the five mana whenua participants stated they no longer participate in IMI but chose to participate all the same.

The interview method was discussed with the chairperson of RIMU's Research Ethics Advisory Group (REAG) to ensure ethical standards were met.

Each interview took about 60-90 minutes to complete. Audio recordings were made of the interviews, however, due to budget constraints, interviews were not transcribed. Instead, notes were taken by one of the researchers during the interview and, later, cross-checked with the audio recording. A draft of the interview notes was provided to the interviewee to amend prior to analysis. Analysis was undertaken using the NVIVO 12 software programme.

A draft report and recommendations were provided to the Steering Committee prior to publication. Recommendations have also been workshopped with the PRG to ensure they are fit for purpose.

### **1.2.2 This report**

The following chapter assesses progress on achieving the eight co-designed actions agreed to at the founding of IMI. Chapter 3 then presents key themes from the interviews with a focus on what has motivated participants, what has been successful, and what opportunities there are for improvement. Chapter 4 provides some concluding remarks and is followed by recommendations for actions that can further enhance the IMI.

## 2.0 Achieving the co-designed actions

A central aim of this evaluation is to explore progress towards achieving the eight actions codesigned at the beginning of the initiative. For the purposes of this analysis the actions have been grouped into three areas: training, whakawhanaungatanga (relationships), and shared decision-making. These three areas are discussed separately below.

It is not always clear how much attribution and responsibility for changes and improvements can be made to IMI. This is because some projects, initiatives and resource do not emerge directly from IMI but may have been brought in from elsewhere. Issues surrounding these questions of attribution and responsibility are explored further in Chapter 3.

### 2.1 Training actions

Of the eight codesigned actions, three pertain to training for local board members. These are:

- Initiate Te Ao Māori 101 training for those standing for election/local board candidates.
- Involve mana whenua in the design and delivery of Te Ao Māori 101 training for local board members to facilitate understanding.
- Mana Whenua design and develop a toolbox resource, delivered by them, to support Te Ao Māori 101 training, and to serve also as a practical resource for local board members throughout their term.

Based on feedback from the interviews it is unlikely that IMI has been directly successful at delivering initiatives that align to the training actions, however, there have been instances where the initiative has successfully acted as a catalyst for generating mana whenua-led training initiatives.

This section identifies several themes pertaining to the delivery of the training actions. Firstly, it considers whether IMI was successful at delivering on these actions. Secondly, it notes IMI's relationships to the Kura Kawana training programme for elected members. The involvement of Auckland Council's Māori outcomes department, called Te Waka Angamua (TWA) until late 2019, when it went through structural change that resulted in a change of focus and name (now called Ngā Mātārae) is also discussed.<sup>3</sup> A fourth theme focuses on some of the pressures faced by mana whenua when supporting training.

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing, Ngā Mātārae is the Māori outcomes department within Auckland Council, led by the General Manager who is a member of Auckland Council's executive leadership team. It supports the council group (including council-controlled organisations) to deliver on Māori outcomes by setting strategic direction; enhancing organisational capability, systems, processes and performance; strategic relationships and Māori participation in decision-making.

### 2.1.1 IMI delivering training

Delivery of the training actions was initially driven by mana whenua participants in IMI. One mana whenua participant recalled that this began early in the initiative, but changes in personnel meant it was not delivered:

*The PRG commissioned a person to develop the Māori 101 package together. Mana whenua and the local boards had input, and this person produced the Māori 101 training package that reflected and was based on the kōrero. Once this training package was ratified at an IMI meeting, the training package was put on to the [mana whenua organisation] website and it was accessible by the members and required a password. Following that a lot of stuff happened e.g., [mana whenua organisation] had an organisational change and [mana whenua representative] left. (MW rep.)*

This appears to be the closest IMI got to achieving the specific training actions.

Some staff we spoke to considered there may be more opportunity for IMI to provide training.

*...is there an opportunity for mana whenua to provide some history, some oversight, some aspirations at the point where new local board members are coming in? So, every time at the beginning of an election cycle there is a real opportunity there, but I don't think that has been taken up well. (AC member)*

However, one way in which training for local board members has occurred was through their participation in other IMI events. One local board member described this learning as:

*Not in a training form. It has come up in hui but not as a specific content or training workshop... Comes up in the whanaungatanga part at the beginning of the hui. (LB member)*

### 2.1.2 Kura Kawana

The Kura Kawana program is delivered by the Governance Capability Team of Auckland Council's Governance Division. It is a three-year development programme for elected members on matters pertaining to their role as an Auckland Council local board member. Kura Kawana includes the Elected Members' toolkit *Te keteparaha a ngā mema kua pōtitia*, available on Kotahi, Auckland Council's intranet.

The keteparaha supports local board members to gain knowledge and confidence in their engagement with Māori. It includes resources for the appropriate use of tikanga and te reo Māori, discussion of the Māori world view, and other information that elected members will likely need to know. There is also guidance for when elected members should contact Ngā Mātārae.

This training is broad and is for elected members from around the Auckland region, not just those participating in IMI. Some Auckland Council staff involved in IMI described trying to bring the perspectives of mana whenua to Kura Kawana.



*Where we tried to have some input into it is by how mana whenua could input into training. There has been a lot of advice to Kura Kawana around how this training should look and what should be included. (AC staff)*

Some Auckland Council staff considered this input to have been a success.

*The quality of the training ... we managed to move the dial in terms of quality through Kura Kawana and its offerings. This project did have a part to play in having a suite of training available post-election. Quite an important achievement. (AC staff)*

*I'm sure there have been changes in Kura Kawana because of IMI. [AC staff member] has done a lot, tried to be accommodating in terms of how training could be better. (AC staff)*

However, there was some scepticism about the voluntary nature of Kura Kawana, and whether it would lead to improvements.

*What is the point of mana whenua going to that trouble if not all board members take it up? (AC staff)*

At the time of writing, conversations were underway at the PDG about including mana whenua in the regionally focussed and voluntary Kura Kawana training.

Another issue raised by a local board member around the training actions was the role of Ngā Mātārae for supporting both IMI and local boards.

*How do we train local board members in understanding te ao Māori, and also in te reo? I have been critical of TWA – they did nothing to assist. [...] If you tell us how, as an organisation, how we need to relate to mana whenua and doing nothing to help with background knowledge, well.... (LB member)*

Similar issues were also raised by council staff.

*TWA (it was) hard to get any support from them. Could get some but it wasn't clear. They were doing their own thing. (AC staff)*

Mana whenua had noticed these limitations too but framed them as opportunities for enhancing council's support for mana whenua, should Ngā Mātārae take up this focus.

*One thing that was valuable was the internal team, TWA. They went in and supported the local board and advisors around te reo and tikanga, doing it internally. What helped is that it showed Auckland Council is a support mechanism. But also, it supports how mana whenua may want things to go in terms of meetings. So, strengthening that internally is important. (MW rep.)*

### 2.1.3 Mana whenua perspectives

Mana whenua reflections on the training actions suggest additional complexities. One of these reflections related to the capacity of mana whenua to provide training, in an environment when they are called on for multiple interactions and engagements.

*Mana whenua are stretched. We want to, however, though our ancestors were gods, we are human. (MW rep.)*

Furthermore, mana whenua representatives also reflected that sharing knowledge about themselves was not always straightforward. For example, one person we spoke to described a portal that had been developed but which had strict controls over to ensure appropriate use.

*We built an online portal .... But there is etiquette to how it is used. Every person who uses it has to be registered – we must know. Therefore, the information is given, but we are able to track them. We want to make sure there is no misuse of the information. (MW rep.)*

A question was also raised by a mana whenua representative regarding reciprocity:

*If I swap my plan, then what? If I share my plan, then what? Has to be some value to sharing it. People also need to say thank you for sharing and then let us see what we can do to deliver on that sharing. (MW rep.)*

## 2.2 Whakawhanaungatanga actions

Two of the eight co-designed actions seek to contribute to whakawhanaungatanga, or relationships, namely:

- Convene face-to-face hui between local board members and mana whenua at marae, early in the new local board term to identify opportunities for ongoing collaboration and partnership over the next three-year term.
- Invite and encourage local board member attendance and participation in mana whenua hui, on matters of common interest.

Successful events have contributed to better relationships between Auckland Council staff, elected members, and mana whenua, such as hui convened by mana whenua at the start of the 2019 political term attended by eight local boards, and inaugural local board meetings and swearing in of local board members for the 2019 electoral term held on marae in Papakura, Manurewa, and Ōtara-Papatoetoe.<sup>4</sup> Local board members are also generally invited to all

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<sup>4</sup> It was an IMI concept to hold southern local board 2019 inaugurations on marae, as an expression of Te Tiriti principle of partnership, and to establish positive local board / Māori relationships from the outset of the electoral term. Three southern local boards progressed the concept. Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board Inauguration held 5 November 2019 on Nga Kete Wananga Marae, Manukau Institute of Technology, Ōtara. Manurewa Local Board Inauguration held 31 October 2019 on Manurewa Marae. Papakura Local Board Inauguration held 6 November 2019 on Papakura Marae. <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/articles/news/2020/07/southern-boards-take-new-path/>

mana whenua hui for council issues/projects. However, there is some tension between improving personal relationships while systemic relationships remain unaddressed.

## **2.2.1 Iterative improvements**

Auckland Council staff talked about whakawhanaungatanga as a key aspiration for elected members engaging in IMI.

*Number one value is that [IMI] is a place that provides a format for building relationships, a regular contact point. (AC staff)*

*... with elected members – the more they hear mana whenua the more their ideas can stick. (AC staff)*

*But also think having a project like this – even though at the PRG level sometimes people come and go – it enables people to pick up the phone. Elected members might be able to pick up the phone. It has also enabled staff to have that type of relationship. Gives you a platform to reach out. (AC staff)*

This enthusiasm for whakawhanaungatanga can be seen in how readily staff were able to identify projects and initiatives that IMI was able to deliver, such as hui at marae:

*There are scheduled hui, when new board members from (x) local board have been sworn in. Council hold their inaugural meetings at marae. But being part of this project makes elected members think (as a) result of being part of this project. (AC staff)*

This led to Auckland Council staff feeling confident that there had been improvement in local board relationships with mana whenua.

*In terms of relationships, (Mana whenua organisation chairperson) commented about being wowed in changes in (Southern local board). Can't pay for that sort of feedback. That is being there, being in the space, trying to keep relationships strong, open, honest, transparent. (AC staff)*

## **2.2.2 Personal, not structural, change?**

As with the training actions, the whakawhanaungatanga actions can be challenging to evaluate as they are not always directly attributable to activities or initiatives. One reason for this is that prior, personal relationships between local board members, council staff, and mana whenua representatives could contribute to the success of an IMI initiative.

*Some of those relationships had formed before this project began but this project has helped as well to get over that initial hurdle. (AC staff)*

Our interviews revealed that personal relationships could make things challenging, especially for new staff who were unsure about how mana whenua could input to their work, as one person described:

*Relationship with Māori is a confused space with Council. When I started, I went online – still didn't get clear direction. I still feel like that. I have an idea of the parameters of the Mana Whenua Kaitiaki Forum, which is regional. But at a local level, that is where the relationships have no structure. (AC staff)*

local board members also noted a tension between structural and individual relationships. One member we spoke to described frustration with not hearing from mana whenua, but how having personal relationships they can call on allows them to mitigate this.

*One frustration that I have is, it can be quite a one-way thing. There are expectations of council [to engage with mana whenua] but it is not reciprocated. 'We are asking you. Show us the courtesy of responding'. I find it a little bit difficult but then I am on the phone – but that is that personal relationship. (LB member)*

It was felt by some participants that personal relationships were more important to a project's success than IMI.

*If we didn't have those previous relationships, how would we make the relationship? Might have to ring or turn up at the office but that is daunting. All these staff doing things and have varying degrees of whether they get it or don't. People understand Māori one person at a time, through individual relationships. One part of council saying we want a good relationship with Māori and the other side undermining it. (AC staff)*

This tension between individual and systemic engagement with mana whenua was also recognised by mana whenua. A mana whenua participant identified that improved personal relationships with local board members does not necessarily generate better systemic outcomes.

*[IMI] has been driven by people that can relate to mana whenua and vice versa. Example – (former local board Chairperson) was able to establish relationships. An example of how it can change. Also, (former local board Chairperson), he reached out. Asked 'what can we do?' and then they will deliver it. It is driven really hard by those who are keen to deliver those relationships. It is not systemic. (MW rep.)*

A tension with relationships operating at a personal level is that there is increased opportunity for them to sour, jeopardising relationships more generally. One mana whenua participant recalled:

*I think I have only been in one meeting where they have not listened properly and got a growling ... Someone who had been around a bit and had a bit of arrogance. Whether there is four hapū or not, everyone has mana, and you're saying, 'you don't' and 'you haven't done your homework'. He hasn't come back since ... That is the measure of the one person, hoha. But the person loses the voice when they leave. (MW rep.)*

Overall, the focus on whakawhanaungatanga in IMI appears to have provided an appropriate process for working through tensions and improving relationships. One LB member recalled earlier meetings between mana whenua and southern local boards in 2013 and 2014 that were ‘not so nice’ and ‘very confrontational’, but noted a definite positive progress in relationship building:

*That was because mana whenua groups were airing grievances and let the board know of their discrepancies. Lot of the boards who came had not engaged with mana whenua. Some boards didn't take that well, and others were ok with it. ... The next big mana whenua hui – everything had softened. So, things evolved. Mana whenua were happier as Council was still trying, and it was good that (local board) and (local board) still came. That has been the story – that our boards, even those who have little understanding of te ao Māori – they are still trying. (LB member)*

## 2.3 Shared decision-making actions

The final group of codesigned actions centre on shared decision-making. These actions sought to find ways for mana whenua to have greater input into local board decision-making processes. They are:

- Provide a representative mana whenua body for local boards to engage directly with at a local board governance level.
- Invite and encourage mana whenua attendance and participation in local board workshops, on matters of common interest.
- Māori seats in the composition of local boards to be explored, aims to encourage more Māori to vote and participate in elections.

It was recognised in the interviews that these actions may be out of scope or hard for local boards to implement. From the outset, it was recognised that the inclusion of Māori seats on local boards is not possible under current legislation or standing orders, however the action was included as an aspirational one.<sup>5</sup>

A number of other mechanisms are available to promote joint mana whenua/ local board governance including through delegation to local board sub-committees, formal input at business meetings, participation in workshops and joint planning / delivery of projects. For example, a hui was held in January 2020 for Mana Whenua to present their priorities to local

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<sup>5</sup> Under the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 Section 11, in order to have decision-making privileges, a person must have been elected. This removes the potential to directly appoint Mana Whenua representatives onto local boards, thereby making it difficult for partnership obligations to be realised. A supplementary report to this one explores alternative mechanisms for increasing mana whenua input into the local board decision-making processes, including local board Plan Standing committees, local board hui, local board Elected Representative Inductions and Co-Management Arrangements. Refer to Dolan, N. (2021). *Increasing Mana Whenua Input to local board Decision-Making*. A report prepared for Auckland Council. Unpublished and available on request from the authors.

boards, and in July 2020 eight local boards shared their draft local board plans with Mana Whenua and attended a hui to discuss.

### 2.3.1 Challenges and blockages

The inherent limitations to these desired actions were recognised at the outset of IMI, but shared decision-making was posited anyway as an opportunity for participants to think differently and creatively about the opportunities for mana whenua input.

*It is more of an aspirational idea, a challenge – Māori seats might have been a mechanism for joint decision making. So, the challenge is how do we achieve it despite legislation not allowing it? (AC staff)*

*Codesign people knew it was aspirational, but they wanted to push. Perhaps want the local boards to explore that as well. They can delegate responsibility. Wanted to keep it in right then, sit there and get people to think. (AC staff)*

It was also consistent with the feedback that mana whenua wanted local board members to bring to IMI, whereby they would take initiative and think creatively about how they might engage, despite the obstacles.

*There are legislative things that local boards aren't able to do but could happen in the grey area that could be a systemic thing. One example – why don't we have one elected member and one mana whenua elected member? Be a part of it but not necessarily elected, as long as you are not breaking the law. Can you do that? Look into it more. (MW rep.)*

Workshops are informal meetings of the local board, and the local board can determine their own procedures. Some local boards invite external parties quite regularly, including mana whenua representatives. However, some council staff we spoke to felt that justifying mana whenua inclusion at local board workshops is problematic.

*local board workshops are confidential so inviting MW to participate is quite difficult. How do you have what Council will perceive, or what legislation would perceive, as an external person? I think you would have a similar thing when you are trying to get local board members to attend mana whenua hui. (AC staff)*

There is therefore an implicit challenge in the shared decision-making actions, namely that the aspirational qualities are not adequately referenced in the wording of the actions. This means that, as IMI has evolved, participants may have come to read the actions literally rather than think through the opportunities for mana whenua input into shared decision-making.

### 2.3.2 Perceptions of mana whenua input into local board decision-making

It is not overly clear what influence IMI has had on local board decision-making. As the following LB members suggest, there were no obvious connections that they could see between IMI and their LB decision-making processes.

*It has to have some real input to actually affect the decision-making model. Not for the organisation to say that 'we have engaged', and 'yes we are doing our best by having these regular hui' and 'that's enough'. It has to translate in some shift in the way we make decisions. (LB member)*

We also found that LB members could be reticent to consider a role for mana whenua in LB decision-making. One reason for this is that LB members appear to be unwilling to go against the perceptions of unsupportive parts of their population.

*What does that look like to mana whenua and the Board as well as the general population? Unfortunately, huge parts of our population – they don't see the value or the requirement. So how do we equate action to the public perception? (LB member)*

At other times, LB members suggested that their decision-making processes demanded a lot of time and resource for mana whenua, and that this was a reason not to involve them

*Mana whenua have said we want to be involved, but it has overwhelmed mana whenua and iwi to do that. We have to be careful that we don't overload them as we feel we must involve them. (LB member)*

As such, rather than approach Māori input into decision-making as something that local boards could think creatively about, or even use IMI to find such opportunities, some LB members appear to have put the matter into the 'too-hard basket', returning to the questions IMI was designed to overcome.

*Involvement in decision making doesn't mean they have a seat at the table, rather, something like the road naming process. How do we make it more than a box tick exercise? How do we empower them? (LB member)*

It appears that some local board decision-making processes are operating at cross-purposes to the creative and experimental attitude IMI was initially seeking from participants, and which is still held by mana whenua representatives. It may also be part of the reason why some mana whenua representatives are working directly with the PDG to get IMI actions implemented in programmes and projects.

## 3.0 Structure and relationships

This chapter explores the reasons and drivers for IMI members participation in the initiative.

Among Auckland Council participants, including local board members and staff, themes of structure and relationships are identified.

The third sub-section discusses facilitation of IMI. As we discuss there are differing perceptions and expectations of IMI, some that complement each other, and others that contradict.

### 3.1 Mana whenua involvement

A key finding emerged of decreasing involvement with the initiative among mana whenua. Around five out of the 13 founding iwi are currently regularly engaged. This has been exacerbated by Covid-19 related restrictions during lockdown as well.

By understanding mana whenua motivation for participation in IMI it becomes possible to identify some of the reasons for the fluctuations in mana whenua membership. As will be seen, the interviews suggest there is a disconnect between the motivations for why mana whenua joined IMI and the way it has subsequently unfolded.

For mana whenua, participation in IMI comes from a range of deeply held values for both the people and the land. In particular, values around tangata and whenua were most explicit. For mana whenua without land-based connections to the southern local boards, participation in IMI is about seeking to ensure their people residing in south Auckland are looked after.

*Our interest is not based on whenua rights and interest in terms of localities – but the people we connect with and the people we represent. It's always been a point of difference to look more at the broader wellbeing indicators of the people in those iwi. With that is a whole fabric of activities that local boards are engaged with. (MW rep.)*

*Here we have the world's largest Māori population, and we have earth-shattering 27% turnout. I took that as an indication of the struggles we go through which we can align with what we are doing as mana whenua, as collectives of mana whenua and forums, and the whole relationship with Auckland Council. At the time there seemed to be a lack of confidence in what the organisational structures of local government would be able to provide the population. (MW rep.)*

One rangatira with whenua-based connections to the southern local board areas described bluntly why they were participating in IMI:

*You see, you are sitting on land that was taken from us – it still hurts. A big driver for us is the Treaty. (MW rep.)*



These two dimensions to mana whenua engagement, tāngata and whenua, inspire participation in IMI as it was perceived as a different way for Auckland Council to engage with them. Notably, a way that could align to mana whenua ways of seeing the world.

*Evolution of change is not being siloed – it is broad. For example, like our Tupuna standing on the maunga. Institutions like council and the like, they need to begin the process of looking broader than saying that this is our piece of work – but rather to include the peripheral. One of the ways to hear what mana whenua are saying – you may not agree with it – but when you hear it doesn't mean you do it to hear what you want it to be. The ability for those that hold power, they have to have the ability to be flexible and communicate that. (MW rep.)*

It was noted that at the beginning of the initiative, some local board members were willing to work hard to support IMI.

*What I found was a positive thing, was those local board members, there was a willingness to get their priorities to reflect mana whenua views. (MW rep.)*

However, over time mana whenua engagement in IMI has decreased, for a few reasons. Some mana whenua suggested that IMI has not made the gains they were seeking and were looking to other forums to achieve their aspirations.

*[Mana whenua rangatira] described leaving IMI after 9 months. The initial process, actions and discussions sounded good but didn't translate into their aspirations. Have been waiting to see if new opportunities to work with IMI emerge, but nothing has happened as of yet. Have been using other forums and relationships to achieve iwi aims. (Personal comms.)*

One mana whenua representative suggested there could be a systemic issue with the way in which local boards do not necessarily get to influence decision-making on matters mana whenua are concerned with.

*As a mana whenua partner, it is great to be in the design phase. But at the Council end, there needs to be a connect up with the local board to hook them in. That will help to set up that relationship stuff. I think that is missing. We have already spoken to the ones who do the programme so why should we talk to the local board? (MW rep.)*

Another described how changes in personnel at Auckland Council meant the energy that founded IMI was no longer present.

*Project really grew because of [name] enthusiasm. Their notions and understandings. It needs people to support and apply the same qualities through the successes and those at the organisation. Shouldn't be a criticism. A project like this is reliant on the voice and the deeds and efforts of a champion and [individual] was that sort of person. They were very open to running a facilitated process, same information at the same time. Made us feel comfortable, and willing to keep the priority of local boards connected with the*

*community. The quality and insights that [individual] gave are not there anymore. [Individual] did have a high skill level to join the parallels or the alignment. (MW rep.)*

Auckland Council staff perspectives on mana whenua attendance were varied. Some staff recognised that mana whenua may dip in and out of IMI and they were not particularly concerned.

*It doesn't worry me too much. The consistency of attendance by mana whenua and some local board reps and even staff has been variable – but I do think having a Rangatira ki te Rangatira forum is key to relationship development and testing the incorporation of the Treaty principles of protection, participation and ultimately partnership. And there are efficiencies from a mana whenua perspective as well. (AC staff)*

However, other council staff expressed concern that low mana whenua attendance could impact claims for the legitimacy of IMI decisions and action.

*If only one or two mana whenua attends, it is easy for local boards to say it's not a collective. It happens. (AC staff)*

*We need the direction or the recommendation of what they want to see. But it is hard when you haven't heard from mana whenua who have interest in the southern area. Hard to know what to do when there are only two or less mana whenua. (AC staff)*

Some rangatira wanted to see more participation from other mana whenua, though they too recognised there may not be enough to draw them in.

*The Governance group needs more mana whenua at the table, but the thing is that there needs to be a good reason for mana whenua to turn up. (MW rep.)*

A further issue of low mana whenua attendance at IMI was a recognition from council staff that engagement in IMI could put them in a complicated position when it came to mana whenua engagement more generally.

*Tension there for me because I'm a part of this but there are other mana whenua that I have to deal with individually. (AC staff)*

The issue appears to be that council staff could be unclear as to what value they could ascribe to IMI engagement due to low turnout. Relatedly, low mana whenua engagement in IMI caused them to question own participation in IMI and IMI's value more generally.

*If it is only one mana whenua – why are the others not there? Is it not working, or not delivering something that is not valuable to them? (AC staff)*

## 3.2 Auckland Council involvement

The interviews also highlighted themes related to structure and relationships. Structure refers to the ways in which Auckland Council staff and local board members consider the distribution of resource across IMI and the way this impacts the initiative. Relationships refers to the qualities of connection within IMI that link individuals and groups together.

### 3.2.1 Structure

As outlined in the introduction to this report, IMI is structured around two groups: the PRG who bring together local board members and mana whenua, and the PDG who are primarily Auckland Council staff from several departments who seek to deliver on initiatives that come from the PRG or that can be linked to the eight actions. However, as noted above, mana whenua have started to attend the PDG to support project delivery.

Over time the distinction between these groups, and their functions, has not been clear to everyone involved. Several IMI participants we spoke to, who had not been involved at the start of the initiative, were not aware that there were two groups. None of the local board members interviewed knew of the PDG, while many PDG members had only cursory knowledge of the existence of the PRG.

Auckland Council staff were often aware of the PRG; however, they felt a disconnect:

*It took me a while to realise that there was a reference group, that we were so supposed to be delivery for them, but I'm still not sure. (AC staff)*

Some members of the PDG described going out of their way to understand IMI but that the documentation was unclear.

*When I looked at the Terms of Reference it was not up to date, I thought it needed a refresh. I am still trying to figure out what the renewed work programme looks like as I saw some bits and pieces and wondered if it was ambitious enough. (AC staff)*

For some local board members on the PRG the lack of clarity of the structure has meant a lack of understanding of what IMI seeks to achieve and what drives it.

*It is also an understanding of things, its importance. When I first started – I didn't understand what it was about. Missed first (meeting) and made it to the second. It was never explained to me what it was about (LB member).*

This lack of a cohesive structure has had impacts on the ability of the PDG members to feel confident about whether the initiatives they were delivering were consistent with the expectations of the PRG.

*Because I was at the delivery group level, from my perspective, there was disconnect between the delivery group and the layer above. ... So, felt like –*

*because we did not have that visibility, [it was] hard to see whether our whakaaro was getting up there and then coming back down. (AC staff)*

The occasions when there is a clear link between work programmes and the PRG may be due to the role of particular individuals. For example, as an AC staff member noted:

*Q: Do you have any thoughts of why these relationships were successful? Or what has contributed to them?*

*A: A couple of people who are very good at driving things and the vision they wanted. (AC staff)*

### **3.2.2 Relationships**

As noted in the introduction to this report, council's Community Empowerment Unit (CEU) holds the funding for IMI. They also manage the contract with the external organisation that facilitates IMI meetings. The way in which IMI resource is held has influenced which council staff participate in the PDG, and in turn, leads to different perspectives, needs and aspirations around the table. CEU participants bring an operational focus to their participation.

*Because we come from that operational space, that community focus, we tend to put forward ideas that are operational. (AC staff)*

LBS participation however tends to be more strategic, focusing on support for governance.

*Do the strategic advice then do the activities, rather than retro fitting. (AC staff)*

This confusion was expressed by one council participant as:

*LBS see this IMI project as governance to support elected members, but it comes out of CEU budget which is an ops space. (AC staff)*

Some staff expressed frustration at the way they thought other parts of the organisation were turning IMI to their own ends, without a clear mandate or rationale for why they were there in the first place. One council staff member complained that:

*[LB outside of IMI] did provide a presentation to mana whenua on their draft local board plan and used IMI as an opportunity to engage with mana whenua. (AC staff)*

Some Auckland Council participants also expressed a need for IMI to link in better to local boards.

*I think there is a lack of getting back to the local board which is maybe the role of the delivery group? (LB member)*

There has also been anecdotal evidence that some southern local boards are beginning to build their own relationships with mana whenua in lieu of the lack of clarity about what IMI is offering in this space.

*[local board] formed their own group. The group is called [name] and is done at more of a local level. [Local board] are active but find more benefit with their own group]. And because IMI has a low level of attendance, they are wanting to do their own so they can develop their own relationship. Don't want to put all their eggs into the IMI basket. (AC staff)*

Another aspect to the general theme of relationships was the ways in which local board members with a Pacific background were able to draw on whakapapa connections to navigate relationships with mana whenua.

*We have that tuakana-teina relationship. It's much easier to accept things from a Māori view, whereas someone coming from a western view, it's not so easy to understand ... Those who are from a western view find it hard to see the link to the land, can't see that they are guardians not owners, they have different views. (LB member)*

This person also described how the broader ethnic dynamics of local boards encouraged them to speak in solidarity with mana whenua.

*Sometimes it's not only me being Pacific, but ethnic, or Other. We have to be that voice to stand up for Māori. As a person of colour, that is the story of our lives. We have to wear multiple hats. (LB member)*

### **3.3 Facilitating IMI**

A key feature of IMI is that the facilitation and secretarial functions have been contracted to an external organisation, Ōtara Health. This section discusses the role and functions of Ōtara Health in IMI.

#### **3.3.1 The role of Ōtara Health**

We spoke to one member of Ōtara Health, the external organisation who had been part of IMI since its founding, and who was heavily involved in the initiative. They described their as ensuring collaboration occurs, along with other more traditional secretarial functions.

*[Our] role was to facilitate the collaborative engagement between mana whenua and Auckland council. And to improve it. (EO rep.)*

*Convening meetings for the PRG and PDG – providing administration, agenda, notes, distributing, engaging with mana whenua groups that are participating and being there to facilitate a collaborative approach. Back office approach. (EO rep.)*

Other IMI participants recognised the benefits of having a neutral party undertake these functions.

*I think they've done a good job. They hold a lot of the relationships. (AC staff)*

*I take my hat off to them. It is a tricky job. If one kicks out, then they have to be there and reconcile so it is quite tricky. [EO] team do a really good job at facilitating. (MW rep.)*

Ōtara Health played an important role in the way in which the structure of IMI emerged, particularly the development of the PRG and the PDG. The representative recalled that this structure emerged in response to initial expectations that they would deliver on the projects that emerged from IMI meetings.

*What was happening was that we had to do the delivery of those projects, which is not what we were there to do. After talking with [name] and [name] we then said Local Board Services need to be at the meeting as they need to do the operational side. ... For us to deliver actions did not make sense. It needed to be mana whenua delivering their actions and Auckland council/staff delivering their own actions. (EO rep.)*

The interviewee considered IMI to be a unique initiative and, noted that while it could be hard for new members to understand, it was through participation that they could come to be comfortable.

*When people who get this really well like, [name], [name], [name] send people underneath, the new ones come in, there is always questions asked as this project doesn't fit a normal type of Council project. But once they sit in it, they start to see how the relationships fit, governance group provides structure and (EO) is facilitating. (EO rep.)*

### **3.3.2 Facilitation style**

Ōtara Health plays a vital role in IMI, particularly its facilitation, which helps to set expectations and processes. Their approach to facilitation of the initiative was articulated by their representative as follows:

*In our model for collaborative engagement, we have a principle of "go with the fire." .... It's not a certain process but it is purposeful, because this is a different way of engaging across CEU, LBS, mana whenua groups. From a Council perspective it doesn't quite fit, but for the project itself makes perfect sense. (EO rep)*

This was also framed around the concept of kaupapa, which can be translated as topic, theme, or issue.

*From my point of view if your kaupapa fits in, you should come along. (EO rep)*

This approach appears to inform how Ōtara Health view the fluctuating mana whenua participation. They considered mana whenua will participate in IMI when they feel a need to. As the quote below shows, Ōtara Health also rely on other forms of council engagement to ensure other mana whenua groups participate in local board decision-making.

*That has been apparent with mana whenua groups. We haven't worried about numbers. Only about two have been coming, there has been around five. But not worried too much as each local board deals with similar mana whenua groups. (EO)*

A challenge of the approach described above is that the opportunity to leverage their history, knowledge, and relationships within IMI for strategic and leadership purposes can be overlooked. Some IMI participants expressed a desire to see more leadership from Ōtara Health, for example.

*Not about the amount of resource. I question the tono [direction]. But, as with everything they need that kind of leadership. (MW rep.)*

*They can take the lead in setting the agenda ... Manage it by being clear, the purpose of the group, what it's used for and having a refresh in recommendations. (AC staff)*

Findings from the interviews suggest that other IMI participants may not be aware of the EO's approach to facilitating IMI and how it informs how an IMI meeting unfolds. Or alternatively, they may be aware of Ōtara Health's approach and might consider it ineffective and is not achieving the intended purpose. For example, one LB member made the following remarks about their experience of an IMI meeting.

*In my experience, meetings were unfocused and more about having dinner then the meeting. The last one I attended, 10 mins in I was still the only one there. When people arrived, there was no other local board members there. Then a couple did arrive late, but there was no structure to the session. (LB member)*

It also appears that council staff in the PDG are finding the 'go with the fire' approach enables non-IMI affiliated parts of council to present to engage at the forum. This leads to a sense of undermining council officers' expectations or understandings of IMI, and could lead to tensions between parts of the organisation.

*Project delivery groups have been hijacked by council departments who are bringing their work programme. They see it as their input into it. For example, promotion of a particular programme. A council staff and department bringing things that have nothing to do with the project and testing it and getting mana whenua input; don't see the relevance to the work programme. (AC staff)*

The idea of Auckland Council taking on the facilitation and secretarial work of IMI was discussed by a few participants. One local board member felt that it might work better if it was brought in-house,

*Ōtara Health has done a good job, but Council is not responsible because we have given it to [them]. So, the officers themselves, don't own those spaces. I wonder if it was done better to do in-house, so it is Council's responsibility. [LB member]*

Others noted that there were parts to the role that worked better being organised externally.

*...arranging meetings and paying mana whenua is internally confusing. Using [EO] to do this is much easier. (AC staff)*

*...but [the role] is quite hard, and if Council take over would they do any better? I don't think we would do much better. (AC staff)*

The representative we spoke to posited that

*eventually [Ōtara Health] will not be needed ...we know that eventually over time [we can step away]. But it takes time to make that culture.' (EO rep.)*

However, they also recognised that there was no process in place to identify when this might be, and that a robust measurement and monitoring system would help generate a good understanding of the effectiveness of their contribution and how they are placed to continue in the role.

*Part of collaborative engagement -when you put indicators to measure whether it is working or not – we have to get those base line measures done. Need to see whether there has been an improvement or not. (EO rep.)*

As it stands no such evaluative process or review is built into IMI. This was also picked up by mana whenua, who were critical of the incomplete actions

*We have action points, and they are not achieved. We are setting true action points. Not people saying they are trying. If you can, fine, but if there is difficulty then talk at the front end or the back end. Don't give excuses without trying stuff. Anything that goes on paper as an action should be achieved. (MW rep.)*

As such, while the external organisation plays an important role in generating tasks to deliver on the actions, it is not clear which part of IMI monitors and reviews completion of tasks and their impacts.



## 4.0 Discussion

This evaluation of the IMI focussed on whether it has achieved its eight founding actions, what has been effective, and what opportunities there are for improvement. Findings suggest IMI has been only partially successful at achieving the eight actions, albeit with the caveat that some of the actions were about enhancing the rangatira ki te rangatira relationship rather than the achievement of particular outcomes.

Data from the interviews suggests IMI actions have been successful at generating initiatives consistent with the actions. However, these initiatives appear to have been left to the PDG to undertake, with unclear links to the PRG; some PDG participants were unaware of the existence of the PRG, or of the actions they were undertaking. All the local board members interviewed were unaware of the PDG while mana whenua representatives on the PRG had taken to attending the PDG to support project delivery.

All participants could point to some high-profile events that had been generated by IMI. These include the local board inaugurations on marae, and swapping of plans, and elections campaign work to increase Māori participation.

Findings from the interviews with PRG attendees show varied experiences. For local board members, there was feedback that IMI meetings needed greater focus and clearer link to the aims and aspirations of local boards. There were also varied attitudes regarding the meaning and value of the kinds of relationships IMI was seeking to generate, especially decision-making.

Mana whenua participants on the PRG were clear about their motivations for participating in IMI. Many spoke to the same points implicit to the actions, particularly as they centred on themes of tangata and whenua. However, mana whenua representation on the PRG has dropped away over the last couple of years with evidence emerging the IMI was not meeting their needs. The PDG was also felt to be disconnected to the PRG, and internally to the PDG there were tensions about how projects were to be delivered.

There is an important role for Ōtara Health in this due to their long history with IMI and the secretarial and administration functions they provide. It may be that they can draw on their history and leadership to restore to IMI, some of the energy it had at its founding. However, the broader landscape for mana whenua input into local government decision-making has shifted since the start of IMI, so it may also be appropriate for a high-level and strategic discussion about IMI's broader role and function.

## 5.0 Recommendations

These recommendations are drawn from the finding of this evaluation. A short introductory note accompanies each recommendation to help show its links to the findings.

### 5.1 Recommendation 1

**Local Board Services to ensure a forum is provided for mana whenua and local boards to discuss whether IMI is fit for purpose and is generating outcomes consistent with their strategies and plans.**

Findings suggest that many Auckland Council participants were not clear about the role that IMI should play in their engagement with mana whenua, and how much value they could place on what they heard at IMI meetings. It was also identified that there are multiple Auckland Council fora where engagement with mana whenua occurs, but it was not clear how IMI aligned or linked to them. Conversely, mana whenua suggested that IMI does not meet their needs and they are looking to gain outcomes for their uri (descendants) in other ways. It is recommended that Local Board Services discuss whether IMI is fit for purpose and generating outcomes consistent with their strategies and plans. This could include:

- High level strategic conversation on where IMI sits within Auckland Council and mana whenua relationships, including to the Mana Whenua Kaitiaki Forum, Ngā Mātārae, individual local board relationships to Mana Whenua.
- The relationships between the aspirations of the IMI group to Auckland Council's Māori Outcomes strategy.

### 5.2 Recommendation 2

**The Project Reference Group (PRG) refresh the relationships and thinking informing IMI.**

Findings indicate that it can be challenging for IMI participants to understand what they might gain from the initiative, what is distinctive about it, and how the actions relate to other council departments or plans. Related to this is the finding that it is important to have the right people around the table to ensure appropriate links between the PRG and the PDG. This role would most appropriately be held by senior Auckland Council staff. It is recommended that the PRG refresh the relationships and thinking informing IMI. This could include:

- Revisiting the eight actions to determine whether they still are fit for purpose.
- Discussing the relevance of IMI with the participating local boards.
- Discussing the relevance of IMI to participating mana whenua organisations.

- Discussing which Auckland Council groups are represented at the PRG and the PDG, including the level of seniority of council staff present.

### 5.3 Recommendation 3

#### **That the Project Reference Group generate mechanisms for ensuring oversight and accountability for IMI initiatives**

Findings from this evaluation show that there is some disconnect between local boards and IMI, and between the PRG and the PDG. There is a need for a mechanism that can assess the effectiveness of the external organisation. It is recommended that the PRG generate mechanisms for ensuring oversight and accountability for IMI initiatives. This could include:

- Refreshing the Terms of Reference for the initiative.
- Feedback mechanisms to participating local boards, including for budget.
- Feedback mechanisms between the PDG and the PRG.
- Building project evaluation into IMI initiatives.
- Sharing successes.

### 5.4 Recommendation 4

#### **The PRG and Local Board Services discuss how IMI should be adequately resourced and managed.**

Evaluation participants reported differing experiences and expectations of how IMI is facilitated and managed. By ensuring that there are some 'bottom-lines' to how IMI is facilitated and managed it may be possible to improve participants' experience while also ensuring it can retain its aspirational energy. It is recommended that the PRG and Local Board Services discuss how IMI should be facilitated and managed. This could include:

- Discussing whether Auckland Council or an external organisation is best placed to facilitate IMI.
- Identification of the traits the facilitation role should embody, and the functions they are expected to undertake, with specific consideration to:
  - Onboarding of new IMI participants
  - Meeting scheduling
  - Forward planning for local government election period and new boards
  - Expectations about circulation of meeting minutes and other relevant documentation
  - Meeting quorums, including for mana whenua participants.

# Appendix A: Terms of Reference, Project Reference Group

Version: 1.0  
Created: 07/04/2017  
Status: Approved  
Approved:09/05/2017

## Committee Name

***Mana Whenua local boards Project Reference Group (PRG)***

## Authority

The project reference group is a key advisory body, with no decision-making or autonomous budgetary authority binding on Auckland Council, local boards, Iwi Mana Whenua or any other group, other than that which it might agree for itself.

## Purpose

The project reference group will assist the project team established to enable the implementation of the 8 recommended actions developed by the 'Improving Māori Input Into local board Decision Making Working Group'. The project reference group provides assistance through oversight and being a key advisor to the project team in their endeavours to implement the 8 recommended actions.

## Scope

To attend project reference group hui, as well as to advise and provide oversight and feedback to the project team on matters related to this initiative.

## Membership

The membership for the project reference group consists of recognised local board and Mana Whenua Iwi representatives from the following entities:

Mangere Ōtāhuhu local board	Ngā Mana Whenua I Tāmaki Makaurau	Ngāti Tamaoho	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei	Waikato-Tainui
Manurewa local board	Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki	Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua	Te Ahiwaru	
Ōtara Papatoetoe local board	Ngāti Maru	Ngāti Whanaunga	Te Ākitai	
Papakura local board	Ngāti Pāoa	Ngāti Whātua	Te Kawerau a Maki	

## Meeting arrangements

Local Board Services through a contracted independent resource manage all of the meeting arrangements for the project reference group and includes the following:

- Prepare and issue panui and agenda via email advising, date, time and venue of hui
- Arrange and secure meeting venue
- Record hui notes/minutes
- Distribute hui notes/minutes
- Manage remuneration for all Iwi representative hui attendees in accordance with Local Board Services funding arrangement (Resources and Budget)

- Lead the project meeting in a chair like capacity but with nil voting or decision making rights
- The agenda is a guide only. The tikanga established over the course of this initiative between Mana Whenua and local board representatives, allows for meaningful discussion, whether long or short. In doing so the participants acknowledge any unfinished mahi is carried over to another hui for another day.

**Note:** All those invited by the PRG members to attend are welcome to participate in the hui.

## Deliverables

The project reference group will provide a six monthly written report to each of the local board and Iwi Representative Entities listed within this terms of reference under the heading 'Membership'. This will be provided by the project team and approved by the Project Reference Group

## Resources and budget

Iwi representatives will be paid \$200 excl GST for each project reference group hui attended by them (on submission of an invoice).

Local Board Services will provide for reasonable meeting resources sufficient to enable the project reference group to perform its advisory role. Specific project funding decisions and budget allocations if any are and remain at the discretion of Local Board Services and Auckland Council.

## Review

The local board and Mana Whenua representatives with Local Board Services will review these terms of reference jointly, on an annual basis or other term as desired following the anniversary date of signing this protocol.

## Appendix B: Terms of Reference, Project Delivery Group

Version: 1.0  
Created: 10/09/2018  
Status: Approved  
Approved: 08/11/2018

### Committee Name

***Mana Whenua local boards Project Delivery Group (PDG)***

### Authority

The project delivery group is a key project delivery team, with decision-making and budgetary authority limited to the grants and conditions approved by Auckland Council on behalf of local boards, for the 'Improving Māori Input into local board Planning' initiative (see appendix 2).

Decisions made outside of the conditions set by Auckland Council for this initiative, are not binding on Auckland Council, local boards, Iwi Mana Whenua or any other group, other than that which it might agree for itself.

### Purpose

The project delivery group operates to enable the implementation of the 8 recommendations developed by the 'Improving Māori Input Into local board Decision Making Working Group'. The project reference group provides assistance through oversight and being a key advisor to the project delivery group in their endeavours to implement the 8 recommendations.

### Scope

Any expectation held for the effort and commitment required of PDG members is limited to the reasonable contribution available of those involved, and to acting within the limits of their level of influence and delegated authority assigned to them from their respective body.

The scope of the PDG's work is to

- plan and organise activities that enable local boards and Mana Whenua entities involved to implement the recommended actions together, and each in their own autonomy.
- seek advice where necessary and provide feedback also to the project reference group on matters related to this initiative.

### Membership

The membership for the project delivery group consists of recognised local board and Mana Whenua Iwi representatives. This representation at an operational officer level, rather than at Board member or Iwi Governance level, is inclusive of the following entities:

Mangere Ōtāhuhu local board	Ngā Mana Whenua I Tāmaki Makaurau	Ngāti Tamaoho	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei	Waikato-Tainui
Manurewa local board	Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki	Ngāti Te Ata Waiohau	Te Ahiwaru	
Ōtara Papatoetoe local board	Ngāti Maru	Ngāti Whanaunga	Te Ākitai	
Papakura local board	Ngāti Pāoa	Ngāti Whātua	Te Kawerau a Maki	

Note: the PRG Mana Whenua representatives and Local Board Services nominate all those invited to participate as a PDG member.

## Meeting arrangements

Local Board Services through a contracted independent resource manage all of the meeting arrangements for the project delivery group and includes the following:

- Prepare and issue panui and agenda via email advising, date, time and venue of hui
- Arrange and secure meeting venue
- Record hui notes/minutes
- Distribute hui notes/minutes
- Manage remuneration for all Iwi representative hui attendees in accordance with Local Board Services funding arrangement (Resources and Budget)
- Lead the project meeting in a chair like capacity
- The agenda prepared ahead of each hui and distributed with the associated papers including a list of actions for follow up and review at each PDG Hui.
- The tikanga established over the course of this project between Mana Whenua and local board representatives, allows for meaningful and collaborative discussion, whether long or short. In doing so the participants acknowledge any unfinished mahi is carried over to another hui for another day

## Deliverables

The project delivery group will work to

- provide a work schedule agreeable to all of the partners involved.
- ensure all activities are well planned and appropriately funded within existing grants before committing to action
- provide a report to each of the local board and Iwi Representative Entities listed within this
- terms of reference under the heading 'Membership'. The Project Reference Group will review and approve the report.

## Resources and budget

Iwi representatives will be paid \$200 excl GST for each project reference group hui attended by them (on submission of an invoice). Travel reimbursement at 77c per KM for those traveling more than 10km to attend PDG hui.

Local Board Services will provide for reasonable meeting resources sufficient to enable the project reference group to perform its advisory role. Specific project funding decisions and budget allocations if any are and remain at the discretion of Local Board Services and Auckland Council.

## Review

The local board and Mana Whenua representatives with Local Board Services will review these terms of reference jointly, on an annual basis or other term as desired following the anniversary date of signing this protocol.

## Appendix C: Latest IMI Workplan

In June 2020 the project reference group endorsed a work plan for the 2020/2021 financial year. This document builds on the endorsed plan and seeks to operationalise and prioritise the direction of the reference group. Once agreed by the project delivery group it will then be re-submitted to the reference group for agreement.

Project description	Objectives	Key delivery actions/projects	Priority	KPIs	Action Lead
<b>Evaluate Māori Input into local board Decision-making project</b>	Understand effectiveness of current project and implement any agreed changes to ensure effectiveness and sustainability into the future	1. Develop evaluation programme and methodology	1		Local Board Services
		2. Agree any changes to project including: * Objectives of project * Project delivery * Governance * Council staff support and budget * Ongoing evaluation framework * Long term sustainability	1		Local Board Services
<b>Elected member development in Te Ao Māori</b>	<p>Improve elected member understanding/use of Te Ao Māori</p> <p>focusing on Te Reo, local mana whenua history/stories, sites of significance and current governance issues.</p> <p>Build strong relationships between mana whenua and individual elected members/boards.</p>	1. In partnership with mana whenua review current materials/websites and update materials to provide electronic and physical education modules for members	2		Kura Kāwana / Ngā Mātārae
		2. Develop/deliver training for elected members on effective engagement techniques with Māori to increase participation	2		Kura Kāwana / Ngā Mātārae
		3. Organise mana whenua hosted site visits by all elected members to marae and sites/issues of significance in the rohe	2		Mana Whenua
<b>Effective utilisation of the democracy options available to local boards</b>	<p>To test and pilot joint governance initiatives between local boards and mana whenua</p> <p>For local boards to partner with mana whenua on areas of mutual interest</p>	<p>1. Schedule a six-monthly hui between southern local boards and mana whenua to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• areas of mutual interest and priority</li> <li>• state of the relationship</li> </ul>	1		Ōtara Health



Project description	Objectives	Key delivery actions/projects	Priority	KPIs	Action Lead
	To find innovative solutions to the challenge of mana whenua influence in local board decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upcoming opportunities for partnership/co-governance</li> <li>• progress on this work programme</li> </ul>			
		2. Provide mana whenua a local board governance forward schedule and invite participation in areas of mutual interest	1		Local Board Services
		3. Develop a discussion paper on issues, options and examples of application for mana whenua and local boards on input to local board decision-making*	2		Local Board Services
		4. Implement a pilot programme of joint mana whenua and local board decision-making across the participant local boards for one year and evaluate success/learnings*	2		Local Board Services
<b>Place-making in the urban south (utilising the advice and approach outlined in 3 and 4 above *)</b>	Support Māori identity in public places  Support the capacity and capability of iwi and Māori organisations to deliver local projects/outcomes  Support Māori employment/enterprise CCOs?	1. Partner with mana whenua and southern local boards to significantly increase urban ngahere in the south	2		Local Board Services / Parks
		2. Support Te Kete Rukuruku and consider expanding this to a southern programme of dual naming for other public spaces/buildings	1		Local Board Services / Parks
		3. Develop a southern plan for incorporating Māori stories/design principles into all new/upgraded facilities/parks and playgrounds	3		Local Board Services / Parks/ CF/ ACE

Project description	Objectives	Key delivery actions/projects	Priority	KPIs	Action Lead
		4. Develop a schedule of southern events for Matariki and Waitangi Day	2		Arts Community and Events
		5. Road naming process	2		Local Board Services
<b>Māori Participation in Local government elections 2022</b>	Increase Māori Candidates standing for public office Increase Māori voter participation in elections	1. Evaluate the elections work programme 2019 to understand effectiveness and learnings	1		Democracy Services
		2. Develop an elections 2022 work programme that details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key objectives and KPIs for success</li> <li>• Schedule of deliverables and milestones</li> <li>• Likely budget required and source of budget</li> <li>• Communications and engagement plan and materials</li> <li>• Mana whenua requirements and support</li> <li>• Risks and mitigation</li> </ul>	3		Democracy Services
		3. Planning for inauguration ceremonies post-election 2022	3		Local Board Services

- *Priority 1 – Immediate planning and implementation commencing 1-3 months*
- *Priority 2 – Commence planning 1-3 months, commence implementation 3-6 months*
- *Priority 3 – Commence planning 3-6 months, commence implementation 6-12 months*

## Appendix D: Interview Schedule

### Intro/Warm Up

Kia ora, to begin we would like to hear a little bit about you.

- Can you tell us a bit about yourself and the role you play in the IMID project?
- Are you on the reference group or project delivery?

### Achieved actions

IMID was initially focused on achieving eight actions that were co-designed by Auckland Council and mana whenua at the start of the project (see below).

- Have you seen or participated in the delivery of this action?
- What has been your experience?
- What impact has it had?
- Any other comment on this action?

### Effectiveness

We are interested to understand how effective the IMI governance and project delivery have been. You might like to consider some of the actions for IMI that were co-designed between mana whenua and Auckland Council in your response to this question.

- What has been your experience of IMI project governance?
- Do you consider it effective? Why? Why not?
- What has been your experience of the IMI project delivery?
- Do you consider it effective? Why? Why not?
- What has been your experience of the relationship between IMI governance and IMI project delivery?
- Do you consider the relationship effective? Why? Why not?

### Improvements

We are interested to understand how you think IMI could be improved

- What improvements could be made to IMI governance?
- What improvements could be made to IMI delivery?
- What improvements could be to the relationship between IMI governance and project delivery?

### Other

Do you have any other comments you would like to make



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