

# Future Excellence Horizon

**May 2024**

Commissioned by: Te Hīringa Mahara –  
Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

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## Te Awe Māpara | Future Excellence Horizon

The Future Excellence Horizon outlines the future aims and direction of Te Hiringa Mahara shaped by the expectations of the people of New Zealand regarding the mental health, addiction and wellbeing sectors. The Future Excellence Horizon describes how the operating context may change and what it means for Te Hiringa Mahara to succeed over the next four years.

## He Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

Te Hiringa Mahara was established in 2021 as a result of the 2018 He Ara Oranga inquiry into mental health and addiction in New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> Following their establishment, Te Hiringa Mahara built the foundations to be the trusted voice in mental health, addiction and wellbeing. As an independent crown entity, their purpose is to assess and publicly report on the mental health and wellbeing of all people in New Zealand, monitor mental health and addiction services, advocate for the collective interests of people with lived and living experience and make recommendations to improve approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

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He aha tērā kei tūā i te awe māpara?

What lays beyond the horizon?

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Te Hiringa Mahara is committed to continuous improvement and is excited about the opportunity to refine their purpose and consolidate the wins and learnings of the last three years in the next phase of their development. Te Hiringa Mahara recognise that key to this work is understanding the current environment and the opportunities and challenges facing the organisation as they focus on maximising their impact for the anticipated future mental health and wellbeing needs of the people of New Zealand.

## Mō Te Awe Māpara | About the Future Excellence Horizon

To develop the Future Excellence Horizon the lead reviewers considered two key strategic questions:

- What is the contribution that New Zealanders need from Te Hiringa Mahara and therefore, what are the key performance challenges?
- If Te Hiringa Mahara is to be successful at meeting the future performance challenges, what would success look like in four years' time?

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<sup>1</sup> [He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction | Mental Health and Addiction Inquiry](#)

The Future Excellence Horizon draws on findings from Te Hiringa Mahara corporate documents, and insights from engagement with a wide range of stakeholders in early to mid-2024 including:

- Lived Experience leaders,
- Māori leaders,
- Mental health and addiction sector leaders and providers,
- Expert advisors to Te Hiringa Mahara,
- Other government departments,
- Senior health officials,
- Te Hiringa Mahara Board and staff.

A key part to the development of the Future Excellence Horizon was being able to engage with participants that could highlight the organisations' strengths and provide challenge where required, accepting that without challenge there is no growth. Overall, there were approximately 180 participants engaged through interviews, wānanga, and a survey.

The Future Excellence Horizon will contribute to the development of the Te Hiringa Mahara Strategic Plan 2025-2029 and Statement of Intent 2025-2029. As part of the 2024 wider strategic refresh, Te Hiringa Mahara is reviewing its Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Lived Experience position statements. These position statements are foundational documents underpinning the Strategic Plan and Statement of Intent.

This Future Excellence Horizon details the future outcomes expected of the people of New Zealand, the performance challenges faced by Te Hiringa Mahara in achieving the desired future state and their contributions toward that goal.

## Ngā Whainga | Future Outcomes

The Future outcomes outline the mental health, addiction and wellbeing outcomes the people of New Zealand expect in the future that are within the functions of Te Hiringa Mahara. The development of the Future Excellence Horizon identified six expected outcomes:

1. Choice in service provision
2. Holistic wellbeing
3. Leadership
4. Empowerment
5. Connection
6. System accountability.

### Choice in Service Provision

During the development of the Future Excellence Horizon, it was recognised that the people of New Zealand want to have a choice of services across the entire continuum

of care within mental health, addiction and wellbeing sectors, guided by the following characteristics:

Accessibility	Services being easily accessible regardless of geographic location and other barriers including in rural areas.
Timeliness	Receiving prompt access to care including for specialist services.
Culturally appropriate	Recognising cultural diversity and providing services appropriate for diverse backgrounds and beliefs, in particular for Māori, and underserved populations.
Equitable	Services that address disparities to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to receive support.
Evidence based	Services based on research and proven methods.

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“People want to be well, and they want to know that if they're not well, then they're going to get access to the support and services that they need right across the continuum. I think they want to have some confidence and the Commission is a really important part of being able to provide that confidence to people because of its independence.” (Future Excellence Horizon Interview)

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## Holistic Wellbeing

The vision for wellbeing for Te Hiringa Mahara is tū tangata ora mauri ora, thriving together. When translated to a whānau or individual level it is when people have their rights, dignity and tino rangatiratanga fully realised. They need to feel safe, valued and connected to their communities and their cultures, and they need resources, skills, resilience, hope, and purpose for the future.

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“I think the broader stuff is really important. People need somewhere to live, to be safe, to be connected, to have some form of income, to be able to put food on the table. All of those broader socio-economic determinants, I think they're really important. And if we don't look after them, we're not going to ever get the wellbeing outcomes that we want for people in communities.” (Wānanga Participant)

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The desire for holistic wellbeing or oranga remains unchanged and is impacted by a range of factors including housing, education, social services, employment, income and justice making wellbeing a broad component of health extending across various sectors.

## Leadership

Participants within the development of the Future Excellence Horizon emphasised the importance of leadership in ensuring effective governance, connecting Māori leadership and empowering communities and Iwi.

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“From an oranga perspective, we've got to get the governance right, and we've got to get the decision-making leadership right within the system.” (Future Excellence Horizon Interview)

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## Empowerment

Participants acknowledged that people want to feel empowered, have self-determination and be in charge of their own health. They want access to information and support that enables informed decision making. This includes having the skills, resources and tools to manage our own wellbeing and mental health daily while actively participating in decision making and solutions.

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“Making sure whānau are involved, empowering them, making sure that they own the decision making and their journey. Providing equitable outcomes, being able to see themselves in the solution and the interaction.” (Wānanga Participant)

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## Connection

In the context of the development of the Future Excellence Horizon, participants emphasised the significance of individuals feeling connected and valued. Additionally, a need for connection and collaboration between services was identified by participants for an improved system and to prevent services from working in silos.

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“Often different systems are working in silos, and they don't really kind of talk to each other.” (Wānanga Participant)

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## System Accountability

The independent status of Te Hiringa Mahara enables the organisation to hold the system to account and provide independent oversight of the mental health, addiction and wellbeing sectors. The participants within the development of the Future Excellence Horizon acknowledged this as critical for system accountability. It was identified that system accountability is required for system change.

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“We need to make sure that the strong, independent advocacy that Te Hiringa Mahara can put forward is clearly linked back to your engagement with consumers. This becomes really critical as a way to do two things, hold the system to account and push the system to do better.” (Future Excellence Horizon Interview)

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## Government Mental Health Portfolio Priorities

In addition to the future mental health, addiction and wellbeing outcomes expected by New Zealanders, the government priority areas were also announced in July 2024. The Ministry of Health on behalf of the Minister of Mental Health, released the Mental Health portfolio priorities cabinet paper. Within this document, four priority areas were identified to build an efficient mental health and addiction system that provides access aligned with population needs and growth:

1. Increase access to mental health and addiction support
2. Grow the mental health and addiction workforce
3. Strengthen the focus on prevention and early intervention
4. Improve the effectiveness of mental health and addiction support.

## Ngā Whakapātaritari | Performance Challenges

This section outlines the key performance challenges currently facing Te Hiringa Mahara. These challenges represent the most critical issues that need to be addressed to lift performance and achieve the organisations’ purpose and anticipated future outcomes.

### Clear focus within the legislation

The legislation governing Te Hiringa Mahara is broad and spans the mental health and addiction sector and the wider determinants of health. Given that wellbeing encompasses sectors such as housing, education, social services, employment, income, and justice, Te Hiringa Mahara, in its current capacity, will be limited in what it can achieve and will need to prioritise.

Therefore, Te Hiringa Mahara must take a clear focus within the legislation to shape their role, clarify their scope and to maximise opportunities for success. Sharpening their focus is their most urgent challenge. The narrowing of focus should include placing people with experience of mental distress, addiction, substance and gambling harm and whānau at the centre.

### Work to improve a fragmented sector

The mental health, addiction and wellbeing sectors are fragmented with providers and services largely working in silos. Current service-centric design and commissioning approaches have driven competitive rather than collaborative behaviour with consumers experiencing varying choice and levels of service across the country.

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“I think the opportunity that I can see is that we need infrastructure investment in mental health to support that integration across the system, NGOs can't see into clinical records for their services and hospitals protect it aggressively.” (Future Excellence Horizon Interview)

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There is also a disconnect between primary, secondary and tertiary care providers which hinders continuity of care between services. Additionally, the cross-sector complexity of wellbeing makes it difficult to collaborate and establish partnerships in other sectors.

There is a need for a joined-up approach drawing on collective knowledge and work from a wide range of stakeholders to meet the needs of all people who live in New Zealand. Te Hiringa Mahara must show leadership in this area to bring alignment and collaboration with formalised partnerships between entities and services across the sector to help address fragmentation.

### Raise the profile of Te Hiringa Mahara

To effectively monitor and advocate for mental health, addiction and wellbeing, Te Hiringa Mahara needs a strong profile within government, the mental health, addiction and wellbeing sectors, the wider health sector and awareness within communities. Survey results and commentary within the sector identified that parts of the sector and public are not familiar with the role and functions of Te Hiringa Mahara.

Te Hiringa Mahara needs to be bold and proactive and elevate its presence within the sector and wider communities. One opportunity is to encourage the implementation and application of the reports they have released and ensure the reports are wide reaching. In turn, this could increase the opportunities for strategic sector wide

communications and monitoring opportunities. These publications currently identify key actions that could be monitored for progress and impact to be evaluated.

Many stakeholders were complimentary about the work Te Hiringa Mahara does but noted that it often happens behind the scenes. Now, the focus is on how Te Hiringa Mahara can expand and deepen those connections, and intentionally raise its profile to support its role.

### Prepare for population changes

The demographics of New Zealand are changing in different ways across the country. While the overall population in New Zealand is ageing, with the projection that the median age will continue to increase, Auckland is proportionately more youthful and ethnically and culturally diverse. Auckland often has the largest net gain from international migration requiring culturally inclusive services.

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“The increasing rates of distress among some population groups, that's quite significant. Inequities are increasing in some areas, solutions that we've used in the past are not going to be the ones for the future. The increase around mental health population-based solutions, needs much more focus.” (Wānanga Participant)

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The future efforts must balance the needs of an aging population with the ambitions of an educated and engaged rangatahi with very different expectations of their society. This presents Te Hiringa Mahara with an opportunity to lead future focused monitoring and advocacy to prepare the workforce and sector for these evolving demographics.

## Te Rourou Pūkenga | Strengthening Our Contribution.

This section describes what change capability or contributions Te Hiringa Mahara will need to meet the performance challenges above and to fulfil its purpose. It was acknowledged that the organisation currently delivers the necessary contributions. However, the section below identifies how these contributions need to evolve, differ or be strengthened to address the performance challenges.

### Te Tiriti o Waitangi leadership

Te Hiringa Mahara have a Te Tiriti o Waitangi Position Statement that outlines their intent to address racism, embrace mātauranga Māori and challenge systems to address inequity and discrimination, with their policies, monitoring, advocacy and evaluation. Te Hiringa Mahara needs to stay strong and committed to meeting their obligations taking into account the current political environment. This will include



monitoring and tracking their progress across their Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori mental health and wellbeing objectives.

### **Amplify the voice of Lived experience**

The voice of experience with living and lived experience communities continues to be a fundamental basis that underpins the work of Te Hiringa Mahara. Their Lived Experience Position Statement outlines their intent to prioritise the voice and interests of people who experience mental distress, addiction, substance and gambling harm at all levels of the mental health and addiction system.

The sector looks to Te Hiringa Mahara as a role model on how to approach, for example, the implementation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Te Hiringa Mahara has a responsibility to continue to elevate their work across Lived Experience to provide guidance and models across the sectors.

### **Proactive and brave advocacy**

Overall, both internal and external stakeholders want to see an increased focus on advocacy by Te Hiringa Mahara. The advocacy should be proactive and brave and maximise the opportunity as an independent crown entity to reflect on the health system and to ask critical questions and provide challenge where required. Finding the right balance between advocacy and the other functions will be a critical question to answer, as the organisation has a finite amount of resource and limited capacity.

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“I think we monitor, we report, we do a little bit of advocacy, but to be honest, I think we need to do things differently, or else we're never going to see change. There's a need that if we want to contribute, we've got to do things differently. We've got to be much braver, much stronger, really put the pressure on because what we're actually changing are systemic issues.” (Te Hiringa Mahara Staff Member)

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### **Building relationships and bridges**

As a monitor and advocate for mental health and wellbeing, Te Hiringa Mahara has a strong mandate to foster relationships within government, the health sector and in wider communities. Strengthening existing relationships and developing new ones, will generate a range of benefits for Te Hiringa Mahara including:

- raising their profile within the sector
- identifying and reducing duplication of effort and support improved outcomes.

Te Hiringa Mahara is also a relatively small entity (20 staff) with a large scope of work and will need partners and support to provide the value to the sector that is required.

In addition, a focus on building partnerships, identifying sector wide solutions and projects will help address the fragmentation in the sector and show valuable leadership in the area.

### Monitoring at a systems level for impact

For Te Hiringa Mahara to be effective in the monitoring space, it needs to be clear about the monitoring landscape and where they have the opportunity to add the most value. It is critical to understand who else is in the monitoring space, what is being monitored, and to what degree.

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“Monitoring and data are useful, but don't let analysis paralysis get in the way of calling for change - much of what is needed is known and obvious. The need is urgent, your action should be too.” (Survey Respondent)

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Te Hiringa Mahara need to make a decision of where to concentrate their efforts in their monitoring functions. The monitoring function gives strength to their advocacy and advisory functions, by providing the necessary knowledge basis and intelligence. As they move beyond their initial establishment phase, they now require careful consideration and adjustment to find balance between their monitoring and advocacy functions.

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“I see the monitoring as a mechanism for advocacy provided it generates the evidence in the sense from which you can advocate an intelligent position.” (Board Member)

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### Broadening reach of thought leadership

Thought leadership can showcase solutions, present critical ideas and thinking, and highlight positive stories that can be adopted and modelled by service providers. It can also provide valuable insights that can influence public perception, reduce stigma and promote best practice.

Participants considered thought leadership as a critical component to the organisation's contribution. It was identified as a capability that would position Te Hiringa Mahara as innovative, solutions and future focused, and leading the sector forward.

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“When I think back to when the first Mental Health Commission was around, one of the things that really impressed me was the kind of the thought leadership that went in, that they actually were able to be independent, to critique, to be a thought leader.” (Future Excellence Horizon Interview)

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### Trusted advisory

Te Hiringa Mahara must position themselves to be a trusted advisor to the Minister for Mental Health, public health sector agencies, providers and the community. From their monitoring function, the ability to influence and provide advice to the Minister can be mutually beneficial. The advisory function is underpinned by their monitoring and analysis functions enabling evidence based, best practice and timely advice to be disseminated, creating trust amongst the sector and further raising the profile of Te Hiringa Mahara.

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“Te Hiringa Mahara has a level of mana in which, just like Kaumatua or Kuia, they have a level of respect, they have a level of authority. They may not always be the ones speaking, but there is a sense that we look to them both as people delivering and developing services, or commissioning or politically steering.” (Wānanga Participant)

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## He aha hoki te tohu o angitū? | What does success look like?

Te Hiringa Mahara is successful when it:

- Is recognised as an independent leader in the mental health, addiction and wellbeing sectors, who is bold, provides reliable information and uses their independent voice. Additionally, is recognised and trusted in their ability to track and monitor their own progress and government priority areas.
- Is recognised as a trusted partner of the government, service providers and community. Striving to be recognised as valuable and reliable collaborators, adept at fostering connections and forming mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders.
- Is operating with a clearly articulated purpose, scope and priorities that is commensurate to the organisation's capacity.
- Has reported improved and equitable outcomes and measured progress for all New Zealanders, including for Māori, people with lived and living experience and underserved populations.

- Is leading or has led collaboration across government and the sector through purposeful networks and relationships to design solutions that address mental health, wellbeing, addiction, substance and gambling harm challenges.

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“Improved outcomes in the wellbeing indicators that you're already monitoring, particularly for Māori. Increased trust from the community of those currently using services, those that speak with and for those with lived or currently living experience, trust with Māori populations, but also some of the more marginalised communities.” (Future Excellence Horizon Interview)

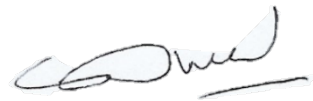
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