



Final Evaluation Report:

Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow

March 2021



Acronyms, abbreviations and meanings

Acronym/ abbreviations	Meaning
CAPA	The Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA) is the foundation for Mana Ake.
CCN	<p>The Canterbury Clinical Network. CCN is New Zealand’s largest district alliance with 12 partner organisations: the three primary health organisations, the three community services providers, Canterbury Community Pharmacy group, Pacific Radiology, Southern Community Laboratories, St John, NZ College of Midwives, Canterbury DHB.</p> <p>The purpose of the alliance is to provide leadership to the integration and transformation of the Canterbury regional health system, enabled by clinically-led service development and service improvement.</p>
CDHB	Canterbury District Health Board.
CORS	Child Outcome Rating Scale.
ECE	Early childhood education providers.
FTE	Full-time equivalent.
Leading Lights	The Leading Lights concept was based on Health Pathways that is well embedded across the Canterbury region and many other health systems in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia.
MOE	Ministry of Education.
MOH	Ministry of Health.
NGO	Non-Government Organisation.
RFS	Request for support from Mana Ake.
School clusters/Kāhui Ako	School clusters, Communities of Learning and Kāhui Ako are groups of education and training providers that form around tamariki education pathways, working together to help tamariki achieve their full potential. The school representatives for school clusters/Kāhui Ako are typically the principal, deputy principal or SENCO.
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.
SLA	Senior Leadership Alliance. The SLA is shared governance between Education and Health in partnership with other social sector and NGO partners.
Tamariki and tamaiti	Tamariki (plural) and tamaiti (singular) is used throughout the report to refer to all tamariki (not just Māori tamariki).

Executive summary

Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow

In 2018, the Aotearoa New Zealand Government invested \$28 million over three years to provide 80 FTE workers to support the mental health and wellbeing of primary and intermediate aged tamariki (Years 0-8) in the Canterbury region¹.

The evaluation of Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has commissioned an independent external evaluation of Mana Ake. The purpose of the evaluation is to inform future decision making about the continuation of the pilot and to inform the larger body of work underway to improve access to, and choice in, mental wellbeing supports at the community level.

The evaluation drew on information from interviews with a broad range of key stakeholders, a survey of school staff, case studies of five schools (comprising interviews with Mana Ake staff, school staff, whānau and a small number of tamariki), a case study of the response to the Mosque attacks, and analysis of administrative data collected by the Mana Ake team to the end of December 2020.

Developing the Mana Ake concept

A small cross-sector group including senior officials from MOH, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) led a co-design process with a breadth of local stakeholders including schools and communities.

Stakeholders all emphasised the importance of co-design to develop an initiative that met the needs of the Canterbury region schools and communities and fitted into the Canterbury region systems. There was widespread agreement that the co-design process was effective. The range of interviewed stakeholders considered their voices heard in the co-design process. Although Māori and Pacific NGOs and other stakeholders were part of the design of Mana Ake, there was insufficient time for robust iwi and community consultation. However, consultation with Māori principals, the DHB Māori and Pacific manager and local iwi are ongoing to build and maintain robust partnerships complemented by Māori representation on the SLA.

¹ The Canterbury region includes Kaikōura. There are differences in the DHB and MOE boundaries in the Canterbury region. Mana Ake does not provide services to South Canterbury (Timaru, Mackenzie, Waitaki and Waimate districts).

The co-design process built cross-sector understanding of what was already in place and what Canterbury region schools needed. This shifted the focus of Mana Ake from individual interventions and clinical counselling support FTEs to a strengths-based, early intervention and more holistic wellbeing initiative, partly in recognition of the need to grow a suitable workforce. Leading Lights was added as an online resource to assist teachers to understand support needs. The concept was approved by Cabinet.

After funding was confirmed, an alliancing approach led by the Canterbury Clinical Network (CCN) progressed the initial, and ongoing, development and implementation of Mana Ake. A cross-sector Service Level Alliance (SLA) formed for Mana Ake led the development of five workstreams²:

- Practice: Development of frameworks to guide practice, assessment and intervention and development of a kete of resources.
- Workforce: Commissioning NGO providers and employing frontline workforce of kaimahi and kaiārahi.
- Implementation: Developing a phased roll-out to all Canterbury region schools.
- Service alignment: Interfaces between Mana Ake and other services and organisations in the region.
- Evaluation: Setting up client management systems and processes for monitoring and data driven continuous improvement.

Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow is a multi-layered initiative that has six core elements: working with school clusters/Kāhui Ako as the mechanism to identify and prioritise need, wrap around and early support for tamariki and whānau, improving access to wellbeing support, enhancing communication across sectors, improving knowledge of mental health presentations and reducing complexity across the system of support.

The Mana Ake team

A core project team of four coordinate all aspects of the Mana Ake initiative. Interviewed stakeholders considered a project team was essential for the collaborative and complex initiative to function.

The co-design process and existing networks within the Canterbury region provided the foundation for an NGO provider collaborative. Thirteen providers were commissioned to provide a mutually agreed FTE of kaimahi (frontline workers) and kaiārahi (senior workers) who work in virtual teams spread across the workforce.

² An initial sixth workstream was absorbed into the workforce workstream.

The mixed employment model contributed to provider collaboration, reduced competition and enabled a diverse workforce and role flexibility. Diversity in the workforce was considered a strength in matching kaimahi with the support needs of schools, tamariki and whānau.

The mixed employment model worked because of provider collaboration but there were challenges for providers and employers in aligning the kaupapa of their organisation with the Mana Ake kaupapa.

The kaiārahi: There are nine kaiārahi (currently 8.5 FTE) who each lead between 2-4 virtual teams of kaimahi. They are employed by seven NGOs. Most kaiārahi are from European/Pākehā ethnic groups and have backgrounds as social workers or teachers.

The kaimahi: At the end of December 2020, there were 79 kaimahi (72.8 FTE) down from 91 kaimahi (80 FTE) in August 2020. A further six kaimahi had been recruited for the start of the 2021 school year. Each kaimahi is a liaison for approximately 2-4 schools and is the school's main contact for Mana Ake. The kaimahi work in virtual teams based on school clusters/Kāhui Ako and likely have kaimahi in their team employed by multiple NGO providers. There was no required qualification for Mana Ake kaimahi³ and they come from a range of different professional and demographic backgrounds. New kaimahi receive training through a three-day induction process and ongoing professional development. Māori kaimahi noted the need for strengthened cultural training. Induction includes some in-person training and some self-completed training modules developed by Werry Workforce Whāraurau.

Kaimahi and kaiārahi roles are fixed-term as the funding for Mana Ake ends in June 2021. As the end of the contract neared, providers were having to recruit to roles that were less than 12 months. Many resignations were to permanent roles, often within the same provider.

The practice, assessment and intervention frameworks

The Werry Workforce Whāraurau was tasked with developing credible evidence-based programmes that could be used and adapted as appropriate within the Canterbury region.

A Mana Ake practice framework was collaboratively developed as a guiding document within which all Mana Ake staff work. The practice framework includes the Mana Ake values and approach to be taken. A persona developed of a kōtiro (young girl) called Maia provided a focus for development. Every decision that was made was assessed next to the practice framework and by questioning how it would help Maia.

³ However, employing NGOs may require certain qualifications and/or experience.

The assessment framework is described at three levels: the community, the school, and the tamaiti and their whānau. The Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA) model provides a strengths-based framework for assessment and service delivery where the tamaiti, family and whānau are at the heart of the process. The CAPA approach describes specific components, promoting seamless service delivery offered at the right time and at the right place, with people with the right skills and knowledge.

The intervention framework was developed as a guide for the kaimahi scope of practice and way of working – to create a consistent approach that schools could recognise but that accommodated the skills and experience of the kaimahi.

A kete of resources

Kaimahi draw on their own professional skills and their Mana Ake training as well as a kete of resources. The kete includes group programmes, resources from these group programmes as well as online or hard copy resources from websites such as Leading Lights and Sparklers. The programmes that were selected or developed for Mana Ake were assessed for their appropriateness for inclusion against a matrix completed by the practice lead and kaiārahi. The matrix formed the basis of SLA decisions about whether to include programmes in Mana Ake. New programmes including cultural identity building programmes developed by kaimahi were assessed using the same criteria before their inclusion as a resource.

Online resources - Leading Lights and the Mana Ake website

A key element of Mana Ake was professional development and resourcing school staff to make decisions about how to support tamariki. The Leading Lights website was developed for school staff based on the Canterbury region's Health Pathways. Leading Lights helps to create consistent pathways for educators to follow to support tamariki and whānau. Professional development events held through Leading Lights were attended by people from a wide range of organisations and were not limited to the Mana Ake team.

The Mana Ake website developed for whānau is progressively updated with relevant information and resources. Other than website hits, there is not information about how the Mana Ake website is used or by whom, although one school we visited said they promoted the website to whānau.

Professional development

Mana Ake ran professional development events for school staff about the health and wellbeing of tamariki. Events were not limited to the Mana Ake team or teaching

staff. These events were initially held in person but the last two have been held online, increasing attendance and accessibility. Events have covered topics including anxiety, trauma emotional regulation, vision, eczema, self-harm, autism, school transitions, and literacy learning difficulties.

Phased roll-out

Mana Ake was rolled-out to school clusters/Kāhui Ako in five phases over five consecutive school terms. Inclusion in each phase was determined by a process informed by schools and based on need and readiness. The first phase included school clusters/Kāhui Ako with a high proportion of Māori and Pacific tamariki. The Mana Ake workforce was progressively recruited to align with the phased roll-out.

The phased roll-out allowed continuous learning and development of Mana Ake processes and resources. The first phase started in Term 2 in 2018 and the final phase began in Term 2 2019. Mana Ake was fully implemented from July 2019 - the end of Term 2 2019.

The tight implementation timelines meant some schools in the early phases were not aware of Mana Ake prior to the roll-out. Well-known and respected education sector champions provided an essential link to schools in promoting Mana Ake. Champions included a Principal on the SLA and the chair of the Canterbury Primary Principals Association. Mana Ake is now available to all primary and intermediate schools in the Canterbury region.

By the end of December 2020, 96% of 223⁴ schools had made at least one request for support (RFS). Many schools (80%) had engaged at least 4% of their roll in individual support from Mana Ake while a small number (19%) had low or no engagement with individual support. Two-thirds of schools (66%) had engaged at least 4% of their rolls in group support. Some schools chose not to engage because they already felt well supported with their current systems and did not want to take resources away from schools with fewer resources.

Mana Ake provides multiple pathways to support tamariki wellbeing

School clusters/Kāhui Ako were either newly created or were developing in parallel with the implementation of Mana Ake. They provided the focus for identifying and allocating Mana Ake resources to schools. The project team and kaiārahi spent considerable time with school clusters/Kāhui Ako to develop their understanding of Mana Ake and their role in prioritising and allocating Mana Ake resources.

⁴ Includes home schooled as one school.

Mana Ake has influenced the ways schools work together. As Mana Ake data becomes available it is starting to inform reviews of the wellbeing support needs of different schools, allocation discussions and strategic thinking about wellbeing. For example, early childhood education providers (ECE) could discuss the support needs for their tamariki so primary schools could plan responses. Secondary schools could highlight the challenges for their rangatahi and discuss opportunities for early intervention while tamariki were at primary school. A transitions group programme from Mana Ake aims to help with the move to secondary school.

Each school has a liaison kaimahi. The liaison kaimahi coordinates activities in the school including drop-in support for whānau, information events, support for teachers and support for tamariki. Support for teachers includes professional development events, advice and discussion. A strong relationship between the school management and the liaison kaimahi enables positive engagement with Mana Ake. Conversely, when kaimahi leave, it is a setback for schools, especially kura and smaller schools who prioritise building the relationship between their community and kaimahi. A structured transition process that allows time to build new relationships would help.

Schools work with a liaison kaimahi to develop requests for support (RFS) for tamariki. After RFS are received, kaiārahi work with school clusters/Kāhui Ako to allocate RFS to kaimahi. This was often the liaison kaimahi but the virtual team model enabled other kaimahi to provide support if their skills or experience were a better fit for the support needed. Some kaimahi move between school clusters/Kāhui Ako to deliver specific programmes. Kaimahi respond to the needs of schools and school clusters/Kāhui Ako. How this is done varies depending on the skills and specialties of each kaimahi and the needs and requests of the schools. This flexibility has enabled Mana Ake to fit into multiple different models of education and management. A practice lead provides oversight of the kaimahi and kaiārahi.

Māori and Pacific kaimahi identified that enabling community referrals would help reach tamariki whose whānau may not be engaged with their school. This was triggered by initial low levels of Māori and Pacific referrals to Mana Ake and the concern that these tamariki were missing out on support because their whānau/aiga were not engaged with the school or classroom teacher. This would require a community engagement approach within Mana Ake.

Noting data limitations resulting in an unknown overlap between individual and group support, individual support has been requested for 4,022 tamariki and group support for 4,346 tamariki of 55,532 primary- and intermediate-aged tamariki in the Canterbury region. Mana Ake data also recorded kaimahi facilitation of 132 whole class groups to an estimated 3,826 tamariki.

What difference has Mana Ake made for tamariki?

There are slightly more requests for individual support for males (59%) than females (41%), although the proportion of RFS for females increases with age. Support has been requested for a higher proportion of tamariki aged nine to ten years old and a lower proportion for tamariki aged five to six.

The outcome tools used by Mana Ake (Tū Tauira and the Child Outcomes Rating scale) both show significant improvements after tamariki participation in Mana Ake across all the domains they measure.

Based on the proportion of young people from different ethnic groups recorded on the Education Counts website⁵, the participation rate in Mana Ake by ethnicity shows that fewer requests for individual support are received for Asian young people (population 12%, Mana Ake RFS 3%), compared to Pacific young people (population 5%, Mana Ake RFS 4%), tamariki Māori (population 16%, Mana Ake RFS 21%), Pākehā (population 64%, Mana Ake RFS 70%) and other ethnic groups (population 4%, Mana Ake RFS 3%). However, the relative proportions of 'did not engage' for tamariki Māori and tamariki from other ethnic groups may be more likely to not engage with Mana Ake than Pākehā.

Not all caregivers give their consent for their tamariki to be involved in Mana Ake. Possible reasons suggested by school staff, kaimahi and whānau included denial of a problem, embarrassment and stigma attached to asking for or accepting help, worry about involvement with services and the potential for Oranga Tamariki involvement, and distrust of school. Some whānau may already have support in place for their tamariki and may not feel the need to have Mana Ake engaged (even if the school think it might help).

What difference has Mana Ake made for whānau?

Kaimahi engage with all caregivers of tamariki for whom they provide one-on-one support. The level of engagement depends on tamariki needs but at a minimum involves obtaining consent, introducing the support plan for tamariki, giving advice and guidance for caregivers and keeping them informed, and providing a closure summary.

Whānau are also supported through drop-in sessions and discussions with kaimahi at the school gate. By December 2020, kaimahi had delivered 843 drop-in sessions at 139 of 222 schools. Drop-in sessions are often held once per term.

⁵ <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics>

Interviews and focus groups with whānau in the school case studies indicate whānau were positive about being able to access Mana Ake support, getting resources and advice from kaimahi and potentially being referred to other services. Mana Ake was free to whānau and reduced the financial burden and waiting times for whānau who may otherwise have had to pay for services. Whānau described positive changes to their home environments that mainly revolved around the positive impact of changes in tamariki. Improved tamariki wellbeing reduced whānau stress.

What difference has Mana Ake made to systems in the Canterbury region that support tamariki and whānau?

Mana Ake has improved tamariki wellbeing by strengthening the system and services in place in the Canterbury region to support tamariki and whānau. Changes to the system identified by stakeholders include:

- Improved networking between providers and government agencies.
- A strengthened and collaborative network of NGO providers.
- Creating a new NGO workforce and continuing to upskill the wider school workforce.
- More formalised links between schools and primary care, the education and health sectors.
- Increased consistency in approaches to wellbeing challenges that tamariki are facing.
- Improved access to wellbeing support for tamariki and whānau.

What are the key features/factors that have influenced the extent outcomes have been achieved by Mana Ake?

The key features influencing the extent Mana Ake outcomes have been achieved are:

- Cross-sector commitment to the need to increase wellbeing support for tamariki.
- Effective leadership and management that leveraged existing networks and ways of working.
- Co-design of Mana Ake to meet local needs.
- Partnerships between the health and education sectors which enriched the thinking of both sectors. Education involvement was essential to develop a wellbeing initiative that worked in school settings. Education endorsement was crucial in implementing Mana Ake in schools. Health sector involvement brought expertise in wellbeing interventions.

- A collaborative approach that was inclusive of NGO providers. Providers were commissioned to provide a mutually agreed FTE of kaimahi and kaiārahi, rather than contracted to deliver a certain number of interventions.
- School cluster/Kāhui Ako management of resources and data informed discussions helped Mana Ake resource schools with the highest level of need and support tamariki as they moved from ECE through primary schools and onto secondary schools.
- Evidence-based frameworks and interventions provide confidence of a consistent approach to support tamariki wellbeing needs.
- A focus on capability building in schools through professional development events, Leading Lights pathways and resources and in building school staff ability to facilitate group activities all contributes to building school staff confidence and capability thereby extending the reach of Mana Ake.
- Mana Ake reduced barriers to access because it is free and based in schools. However, the flexibility to deliver support in other settings (such as in the home) was also important for some whānau.
- Continuous review and reflection internally and with schools informed by internal evaluation. However, data system limitations mean most reviews are focused on the support provided to tamariki and not on the breadth of Mana Ake activities.

Opportunities to strengthen Mana Ake

The evaluation findings consistently support the value of Mana Ake as a holistic and multi-layered initiative to support wellbeing. Leadership will be important as Mana Ake enters its next phase. The project team and portfolio leads have been key to a consistent and organised response. The diversity of membership on the SLA has underpinned a collaborative cross-sector approach and it is important that this is maintained.

Opportunities to strengthen Mana Ake suggested by the evaluation include:

- Using the evaluation findings to review the focus of each portfolio to ensure relevance and identify any changes as Mana Ake enters the next phase.
- Strengthening the workforce. The Mana Ake workforce are the essence of Mana Ake. Fixed-term contracts have contributed to challenges retaining the workforce. Reviewing in more detail reasons for kaimahi staff turnover would inform strategies to retain the workforce.
- An increased focus on equity can be achieved by increasing the number of Māori and Pacific kaimahi, privileging cultural knowledge and expertise, and continuing to improve the cultural competence of the Mana Ake workforce as a whole.

- Ongoing communication strategies to continue to raise awareness of Mana Ake and of professional development activities, and to remind school staff about Leading Lights.
- Reducing the impact of Mana Ake staff turnover on schools. For example, by reducing the reliance of a school on one kaimahi and/or structured kaimahi transition plans that recognise the need for relationship building with new kaimahi.
- Continuing data-informed strategic discussions with school clusters/Kāhui Ako about the support needs of incoming tamariki and how to intervene before tamariki reach secondary school.
- Examining why the young age groups are under-represented amongst tamariki supported by Mana Ake and discussing at SLA whether there needs to be education for schools about what younger tamariki could gain from Mana Ake. Tamariki who are not regular school attenders may also be missing out and further understanding of how to reach them is suggested.
- Using knowledge gained to determine the balance between the intended duration of individual support for tamariki and the numbers of tamariki who can be supported. Schools understood the prioritisation process but still expressed concerns about delays in accessing support.
- Discussing the role of Mana Ake in supporting tamariki from whānau with complex needs and whether additional professional development is needed for kaimahi or whether pathways to other services need to be strengthened.
- Increasing the numbers of whānau support activities and promoting the Mana Ake website may continue to provide an alternative avenue of support.
- Improving the data collected. Mana Ake has a much wider reach than individual and group support for tamariki but the current data collected was developed within time constraints and is focused on individual support. There is a gap in New Zealand specific ways to measure wellbeing that could be used to monitor school wide change and inform the wider impact of Mana Ake. Alignment with the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy measures would enable national comparisons.
- Investing in upgrading the administrative data systems and considering what needs to be collected would improve the data driven continuous improvement. Robust Mana Ake administrative data are essential to inform the effectiveness of Mana Ake.

Transferability of Mana Ake to other locations

The Mana Ake initiative was developed to meet tamariki wellbeing needs in the Canterbury region. It has developed as an integrated part of the wider Canterbury region systems. While some aspects of Mana Ake apply to other locations, other aspects will need to be co-designed to work within local systems, services and schools. Communities in other localities may have different needs and priorities to enhance tamariki wellbeing.

Collaborative and cross-sector co-design of the Mana Ake model was fundamental to effectiveness. Time and resourcing will be needed for the co-design and consultation phase. Ensuring adequate time for design and development enables robust partnership with iwi and community consultation to adequately include Māori priorities and contributes to ensuring equity of outcomes.

The evidence-based interventions and resources developed and used for Mana Ake have all been reviewed for their appropriateness for Aotearoa New Zealand. Kaimahi developed local cultural identity building programmes to fill an identified gap. Most resources would be applicable in other localities. Additional resources may be required to support a kaupapa Māori approach.

Although Mana Ake interventions were based on the CAPA approach, alternative strengths-based approaches, including kaupapa Māori initiatives, could be equally effective as long as they were able to be integrated within education and health contexts.

A core element of Mana Ake was the combination of education and health sector expertise and a focus on school clusters/Kāhui Ako to think strategically and allocate resources. The intentional inclusion of Māori within the partnership has the potential to strengthen the programme and enhance equity, especially in localities with a high proportion of Māori. Similarly, in localities such as South Auckland inclusion of a Pacific partner(s) would be essential to develop a multi-layered initiative.

Leading Lights includes resources that are applicable nationally. However, specific pathways will need to be developed for other localities. The Intellectual Property rights for Leading Lights allows its use throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. The developer of Leading Lights has adapted it for international use, demonstrating its transferability.

The Mana Ake mixed employment model worked because of the Canterbury region's alliancing experience, existing networks and provider collaboration. Other employment models may be required in other localities. However, a diverse workforce is important and strengthening provider networks contributed to strengthening the Canterbury region's systems of support.

Mana Ake is limited to primary- and intermediate-aged tamariki. However, the age limit creates challenges for area schools and other schools such as kura that include tamariki across all school age groups. The benefits of early intervention are clear but if Mana Ake moves to other localities the role of Mana Ake in small and composite schools working across the age range will need to be considered.