

EVIDENCE CENTRE UPDATE

EVIDENCE CENTRE | UNDERSTANDING WHAT
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA | WORKS FOR TAMARIKI

THE ORANGA TAMARIKI EVIDENCE CENTRE



Welcome to the second issue of our Evidence Centre update. Since our first newsletter edition in July, our teams of researchers, evaluation specialists and data analysts at Oranga Tamariki have been busy at work, continuing to build a strong evidence base to support the work of the Ministry. Over the past few months we have published work on a variety of topics, including programmes and services for school students, and youth justice issues.

Our next cross-agency Evidence Centre seminar is fast approaching. Our sixth seminar in the series will feature two

presentations, one from Eyal Apatov (Oranga Tamariki) about factors explaining the disproportionately high rates of Māori and Pacific youth "Not in Employment, Education, or Training," the other from Moira Wilson (MSD) about the tangible impact that the "Social Workers in Schools" programme is having on students.

The seminar will take place on Friday 28th September at 10:30am.

[Click here to register for a seat.](#)

PRESENTING OUR WORK IN PARTNERSHIP



Credit: Victoria University of Wellington

In September, Rosie Deuschle from the Analytics and Investment team within our Evidence Centre and Bridget Browne, one of our EY colleagues who has been working alongside us to build our lifetime wellbeing model for New Zealand children, attended the *Third International Conference on Well-Being & Public Policy* at Victoria University of Wellington.

The third in the series of international conferences brought together leading scholars on wellbeing, speakers from several international organisations, and senior practitioners with experience in applying wellbeing principles to public policy.

The conference aimed to critically evaluate the rapidly expanding field of wellbeing research across a range of disciplines, share the work of leading international organisations, and distil ideas and practices which will aid governments in developing wellbeing approaches to public policy.

Rosie and Bridget presented at the conference on the lifetime wellbeing model for New Zealand children, the importance of understanding the multiple facets of wellbeing and the correlations between them, as well as how conceptualising and measuring wellbeing has the potential to change the way we think about and support New Zealand's children.

The lifetime wellbeing model captures data on all children and young people living in New Zealand and has been designed as a tool that the entire social sector can use and benefit from. It enables the Evidence Centre to map the wellbeing of all children at a population level and can help inform advice on different sub-populations. It can also model the potential impact of changes to policy settings on different population groups, and help ensure that investment decisions align to the government's strategic objectives.

You can view the presentation here. Or, if you want to know more about the wellbeing model, please send an email to research@ot.govt.nz

RESEARCH SEMINARS

The Evidence Centre hosts regular seminars, in collaboration with social sector partners. Learn more about our previous seminars showcasing research for those working in areas that impact New Zealand's children and families.

What is the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), and how can it help us measure the impact of Oranga Tamariki services on children and their families?

Our July 2018 seminar featured presentations about the IDI, and how can it help us measure the impact of Oranga Tamariki services on children and their families.



What is Statistics New Zealand?

Anna McDowell is Senior Manager for Integrated Data at Stats NZ. She provided an overview of what the IDI is and how Stats NZ manages it, as well as covering a brief history of how it began, how Stats NZ keep the data safe, the kind of insights researchers are gaining to help New Zealand, and where to next.



Evidence Used to Evaluate Family Start

Davina Jones is Manager of the Evaluation Team in the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, Paul Arts was the Oranga Tamariki Pa Harakeke team leader. Davina and Paul talked about what we know about Family Start to date and the different types of evidence used to evaluate it. They also discussed the tangible impact linked data is having on the Family Start programme.

IDI Insights: Understanding Multiple Disadvantage and Vulnerable Transience

Our May 2018 seminar featured presentations about current multiple disadvantage and vulnerable transience using data from the IDI.



Multiple Disadvantage and Government Spending

Eric Krasso Peach is a senior analyst and researcher at the Ministry of Social Development (formerly of Superu). Eric gave a short presentation on his work exploring multiple disadvantage using General Social Survey data linked to the IDI.



What is the Scale of Vulnerable Transience in New Zealand?

Jason Timmins is a principal analyst at the Education Review Office (formerly of Superu). Jason's presentation looked at "transience" – something that can lead to poorer outcomes in education, health and wellbeing. Jason reported on research, commissioned by Superu that used the IDI to estimate how many New Zealanders are transient and at risk of poor life outcomes.

A Focus on Youth Justice

Our March 2018 seminar featured presentations about current Youth Justice research and cross-agency initiatives.



What's Behind the Demand for Remand?

The Evidence Centre's Philip Spier has worked as a researcher in government for 30 years, mostly doing quantitative data analysis in the wider justice sector. He presented his most recent research, which examined remand decisions, bail conditions, and custodial options in relation to young people charged with offences.



Youth in Corrections and the Youth Crime Action Plan

Dr Ashley Shearer is the Department of Corrections' Principal Advisor - Youth Strategy. Ashley talked about work underway to improve outcomes for youth in Corrections and how working collectively as part of the Youth Crime Action Plan can help to reduce crime committed by children and young people.

Supporting Young People through Times of Transition

Our February 2018 seminar was a timely event that attracted a large and lively audience.



Evidence Centre researcher **Mya Liston-Lloyd** presented on an evaluation of two well-regarded Auckland services working with young people as they move from being in care to living independently.



Nicholas Pole, Chief Review Officer at the Education Review Office (ERO) spoke about pilot programmes in the East Coast area working with at-risk young people as they transition into secondary school.

Defining and Measuring Wellbeing and Poverty

Our November 2017 seminar proved a popular topic for the Evidence Centre's first seminar.



Daniel Miles, manager of the Analytics and Investment team within the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, explained our lifetime wellbeing model for New Zealand Children.



Bryan Perry of Ministry of Social Development discussed child poverty across New Zealand, and the challenges of measuring it.

MEET THE MANAGER: ABBY JOHNSTON



Abby has an extensive history as a practitioner of research and evaluation. She has worked in management and consultancy both in New Zealand and the UK, and brings a significant depth and breadth of experience in this field.

She has worked in a number of managerial R&E roles in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors, committed to evidence-based policy and regulation.

As a research and evaluation specialist, Abby has engaged with a range of public and voluntary sectors on issues such as health and social care, wellbeing, social inclusion and criminal justice, including the UK's Department of Health, Home Office, Care Quality Commission, and the Office for National Statistics, and in New Zealand, the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Labour, and MBIE.

More recently she led health and safety research and evaluation in WorkSafe New Zealand, where she gained valuable experience working in a newly established entity, building the R&E function for the Health and Safety regulator.

I joined the Evidence Centre 8 months ago, and it has been an exciting time and an honour to be a part of Oranga Tamariki's journey. A new way of working with new services, systems and approaches has essentially placed research at the heart of the Ministry's reflective learning.

What really matters to me is that robust, reliable evidence is used to inform decision-making. On a daily basis my role is about ensuring that decisions made to improve children's lives are evidence based; that we are able to develop insights into child and youth wellbeing and improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau. The opportunity to make a difference is huge.

One of the three teams in the Evidence Centre, the Social Research & Analytics Team drives the research agenda to support the Ministry in the development of evidence-based policy and operations. Our vision is to do research that:

weaves together hindsight, insight and foresight to enable the learning culture of Oranga Tamariki and to improve the lives of tamariki & whanau.

This strategic research to inform the priorities of the Ministry, as well as evidence briefs, literature reviews, meta and data analysis, surveys and other primary and secondary research products that contribute to public discourse and debate about what works to improve outcomes for children and young people.