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# MTFJ DISCUSSION POINTS FOR MAYORS

## Introduction

A focus for the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs at the moment is demonstrating the programme's value to the new government. That means ensuring ministers and MPs understand how it works and what its benefits are, when any future funding decisions are made.

This document is designed to assist your engagement with MPs, Ministers, and other relevant central government decision makers on the future of the MTFJ programme.

It stresses how the programme is consistent with localism and the social investment model, which are two influential policy approaches for the current government when considering areas like education, justice, and social welfare.

## What is MTFJ?

- MTFJ was founded over 20 years ago by a group of mayors whose aim was to generate effective action to ensure 'zero waste of youth talent', and has so far helped over 6000 young people into work.
- MTFJ supports young people not engaged in employment, education or training, solo parents, people with disabilities and other long-term beneficiaries.
- The power of the programme comes from Mayors leveraging their relationships and local knowledge, specifically by:
  - Using community connections to find employment opportunities, and actively supporting local employers to take on young people into their workforce.
  - Providing young people with a needs assessment, goal setting, training and development opportunities, such as work readiness courses and personal development opportunities, driver licensing, and investment in workplace literacy and numeracy.
  - Direct mentoring of young people by mayors.
- MTFJ is grounded in values of localism, devolution, and community control. It gives local communities the ability to come up with local solutions.
- The programme strongly complements the Government's approach to curbing welfare dependency and its social investment agenda, as well as the Prime Minister's strong focus on improving educational outcomes.



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### Evidence of MTFJ's success

- ImpactLab assessed the Community Employment Programme in six participating districts in 2020, including Ōtorohanga. It found that:
  - Across those six areas there was a social return on investment of \$5.60 for every dollar invested.
  - These benefits accrued in terms of earnings and income, but also in significantly improved health outcomes.
- This is a high return on investment, even without accounting for benefits for community cohesion, and participants' communication skills, resilience, and sense of purpose.

### Alignment with the social investment model

- Minister for Social Investment Nicola Willis describes social investment as being “about using data, evidence and modern analytics to invest in earlier and better intervention that can effectively break cycles of disadvantage, dependence and despair. It’s about moving beyond good intentions towards hard evidence about what works. Improving these peoples’ lives is not only a sign of a decent country, it’s a recipe for safer communities and a stronger economy.”
- As well as providing measurable results, MTFJ’s local and community-driven approach allows for innovation, given the wide range of communities it is deployed in and the autonomy it allows for.
- This makes it a perfect model for applying the social investment approach because of the potential for tailored solutions and innovation at a local level, depending on individual and community need, with finetuning in different areas.

### Social procurement outcomes from MTFJ:

- MTFJ also supports positive outcomes through the use of social procurement, developed in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development
- These outcomes include:
  - Capacity building – growing the capability of local suppliers through training, mentorship, and other support mechanisms
  - Employment – creating additional employment opportunities, particularly for marginalized or disadvantaged groups
  - Community engagement – actively involving community groups in procurement processes
  - Facilitating MSD support – suppliers receive assistance from MSD for employment and upskilling initiatives
- Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to ensure these objectives are delivered on, and suppliers who meet or exceed these goals are recognised for their efforts.



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## The future for MTFJ

- Despite its successes, the previous Government did not give MTFJ the same level of funding over consecutive years. Funding dropped from \$14m to \$10m between the 22/23 and 23/24 financial years – and there is now an allocation of only \$8m for 24/25, putting significant constraints on the operating model.
- New Zealand currently has growing unemployment rates and cost-of-living pressures. During tough economic times, unemployment in marginalised groups such as at-risk youth, solo parents and people with disabilities has the tendency to skyrocket, particularly in our rural communities where MTFJ is most prevalent.
- MTFJ is a grassroots, evidence-based approach that has a proven track record of success. We all need to advocate on the programme's behalf in any discussions with Ministers who could help secure its future.
- If you want to find out more, or would like to see firsthand the impact that MTFJ has made in your area, please let me know and I am happy to put you in touch with the MTFJ team.