Surveying Research on New Zealand Government: What Next?

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This paper surveys research on the New Zealand government, both academic research and research that is linked directly to policy development. By academic research, we mean research that is motivated principally by a desire to add to knowledge although it may also contribute to the policy process. Research that is linked directly to policy development is usually done in or for government departments and agencies and constitutes part of the policy process, although it may also add to knowledge.

We take a wide view of 'government'. The local terminology distinguishes the 'public service', the 'state sector', and the 'public sector'. The public service is essentially the departments and their staffs directly responsible to ministers. The state sector encompasses the public service, but includes Crown entities that tend to be engaged in service delivery, and which have some degree of arm's length in their relationships with ministers. The public expenditure which flows through the state sector is much greater than that managed directly by the public service although Crown entities interact with departments as they manage flows of public expenditure. The public sector encompasses the state sector as well as regional and local government.

In recent years, the New Zealand government has given emphasis to improving the capability of the public service, especially through its Senior Leadership and Management Development Project (SLMDP). The basic strategy of SLMDP has been to start with the public service, but always to envisage an extension to the state sector and then to the public sector. Victoria University of Wellington's School of Government (VUWSoG) has accepted a special responsibility for providing or organizing input of academic knowledge and expertise to SLMDP. It has also adopted a strategy of concentrating initially on the public service while always envisaging extension to the state sector and to the public sector.

VUWSoG is focused on bringing academic expertise and knowledge to bear on enhancing public sector capability within the standard academic enterprise. We understand the objective of enhancing public sector capability and the concerns of 'New Zealand government' to extend to how government understands the society in which it operates. We also include understanding and modifying the constraints on government that are imposed by non-government sectors – business, NGOs, and the public. While this article has an emphasis on policy development and implementation at a central level, the underlying concept of New Zealand government is a wide one.

Disciplinary Research

The academic literature that bears on governance and the governed is wide. We think it important to recognise both the range and extent of the relevant literature on the one hand, and on the other, to acknowledge that its principal motivation is not to contribute to the work of those most engaged in developing and implementing government policy. In New Zealand, as elsewhere, it is not unknown for politicians and officials to bemoan the irrelevance of much of the research being funded by public expenditure. Nor is it unknown for researchers to bemoan the way government wants research of a restricted kind and will not recognise the relevance, let alone the value, of really interesting research possibilities. Even when policy managers have a broad appreciation of research, and when researchers want to contribute to public issues as well as attract public funding, the

coincidence of agendas tends to be limited by the difference in principal objective.

Accordingly, in this section, our purpose is to give a sense of the existing research literature that bears on New Zealand government. The coverage of topics is far from complete, and the coverage within topics is indicative only. We begin with the two areas of public management and political institutions/processes that constitute academic research rather than policy studies. We then treat briefly a number of other disciplinary areas or topics where the research is of the same character.

Research tends to proliferate in areas in which New Zealand policies and practices are of interest overseas. In government and governance, the state sector reforms have attracted significant international interest (Boston *et al*. 1996; *Journal Policy Analysis and Management* 1997; Scott 2001) Overseas researchers and practitioners look with interest on New Zealand's innovations in numerous other policy and management areas, including resource management (Erickson *et al.* 2003) engagement with Treaty of Waitangi issues (Durie 2003; Brookfield 1999;Coates and McHugh 1998; Kawharu 1989; Loomis 2000) genetic modification, and accident compensation and rehabilitation. Such attention sustains research productivity in these areas. In other policy and management fields, New Zealand researchers have taken advantage of the country's small size, diversity, and other specific characteristics to interest international audiences in universal themes, often as contributions to comparative research programs (Furubo *et al.* 2002).

Most large scale research funding flows through government, though some governance related research is supported by the business sector. In recent years, contestable research fund criteria have steered researchers to more and more specific areas of research and required demonstrable benefits to specific national objectives. For example, a recent round of proposals in the social science strand of the Foundation for Research Science and Technology called for research in one of three discrete areas, youth, ageing populations, and workplace issues. Contract research for government departments presents another avenue for researchers.

The third driver for research choice differs from the first two. Whereas the first two drivers of research choice – international attractiveness and government priorities – are demand drivers, the third is a supply driver, and is as variable as are researchers themselves. Researchers study what is close to home or at hand, current, judged to be in need of critical analysis, and curious or puzzling to them. A great deal of research in New Zealand on government or governance falls into one of these categories. Unless the other factors are present, however, such research outputs remain as specialised interests, and do not form a critical mass of scholarship within the country.

All three factors together contribute to a strong academic contribution to issues that are, or are on the horizon, of government's attention, or that are otherwise prominent issues. Here we concentrate on illustrative themes at the confluence of the three research drivers.

Public management

Some of the most internationally prominent work by New Zealand researchers has been in the area of the public sector reforms. Many observers of the New Zealand reforms have agreed that the new arrangements succeeded in raising output productivity and production efficiency (Schick 1996; Scott 2001; Boston 1995). At the same time, however, concerns have been raised about perverse behaviours in the public service that have resulted from reformers' efforts to 'impose order on a series of paradoxes' rather than 'understanding management, as an art of balancing a series of necessary and irreconcilable opposites' (Norman 2003; Norman and Gregory 2003).

Another theme of the critiques has been the apparent tension between the New Zealand model's emphasis upon operational management (via innovations such as performance contracts, accrual accounting and budgeting, and output-based appropriations), on one hand, and ministers' imperatives for strategic policy development, on the other (Schick 2001). According to critics, the model's accounting arrangements (particularly the estimates, departmental forecast reports, and purchase agreements) encourage managers to deliver a pre-defined set of goods and services as efficiently as possible, with attention to

quantity, quality, timeliness, and cost, but they do not provide similarly well-defined and institutionalised channels for scrutinising the appropriateness of those goods and services or for comparing the performance of current outputs with the potential performance of alternative purchases (Baehler 2003).

The state of affairs in New Zealand at present – particularly in relation to the 'managing for outcomes' framework, following the *Review of the Centre* – is one where the practice is way ahead of the theory. There are many tacit and emerging practices developed by those in contact with government clients that seem to be much geared towards 'managing for outcomes', more so than the ideas, models and documents emerging from the corporate centre of government. Practices reflect less knowledge about what is actually required, and focus perhaps too much on institutional arrangements and processes.

If so – and this observation attracts a surprising amount of agreement in academic and professional circles – several implications arise for academic research in public management in New Zealand. It suggests that this is not a time for formal analytical or explanatory research undertaken by individuals who are entirely distanced from practice. It is time to develop case studies and histories, to explore, develop and evaluate applications and to bring an applied approach to research (Ryan 2003; Gregory 2002).

Managing for outcomes

New Zealand's current 'managing for outcomes' initiative seeks to enhance the public sector's strategic capacity. Action research has played an important role in managing for outcomes in New Zealand, particularly through the Pathfinder Project, which operated between 2001 and 2003 as a hothouse for accelerating the development of practical planning and management methods that could improve results for departments across central government. Among the tools highlighted by Pathfinder is an adaptation of Funnell's 'intervention logic'(1997) which in turn adapts earlier project management techniques based on cause-and-effect logic models. The attempt to codify logic models as a tool for strategic planning, and encouraging

their use throughout the public service, stirred debate among the academic community and caught the interest of conference organisers in the United States (Baehler 2002a; Baehler 2002b; Gregory 2003; Wolf and Turner 2002). The worldwide drive toward managing for outcomes is closely associated with a concurrent drive to elevate the status of program evaluation in policy making. New Zealand researchers have made significant contributions to this field (Lunt *et al.* 2003).

Demography

The Population Association of New Zealand maintains a lively program of demographic research. Its principal themes are well illustrated in a special issue of the *New Zealand Population Review* on 'Population and Social Policy' (2003).The themes which have the strongest demographic elements include the structure of the aggregate New Zealand population and its determinants, the dynamics of regional populations, population trends in social groups especially women and Maori, and the size and nature of migration flows and the experiences of migrants within New Zealand. These themes include commentary on policy issues, with the special issue introduced by a comment on 'Population and Policy', but the content is more about the context in which policy will be implemented than about research that leads directly into policy development. There are articles in the special issue which bear more directly on policy issues – the relationship between unemployment and household structure, the relationship between living standards and demographic characteristics,[2] and on social capital, social networks and employment patterns (King and Waldegrave 2003). These articles have only a little more demographic content than papers that appear in the *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Journal,* and indeed many of the same authors have appeared in recent issues of that journal with closely related material.

There are clear links between this research and policy issues. For example, the Jensen *et al.* paper on living standards (and an analogous paper in the *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*) is related to the development of policy about the extent to which adequacy of living standards among the aged has to be assessed

on a more complex criterion than real income. An even more striking example is the way that measurement of the Maori population is related to policy debates about the provision of social services to Maori; it has become conventional to talk about the 'browning of New Zealand' and the rise in the proportion of the future population which will be Maori, without adequate appreciation of the extent to which that conclusion is an artefact of categorisation conventions, and of the way in which because of intermarriage among ethnic groups, many of the future Maori will be the descendants of present Pakeha (Callister 2004). The context of policy, and the design of policy interventions could easily be predicated on misunderstandings of social and demographic research.

Sustainable development and local government

In recent years there has been considerable international interest in New Zealand's approaches to environmental policy and resource management reform (Buhrs and Bartlett 2000; Memon and Perkins 2000). Since 1991 the New Zealand government has adopted an overall strategy for sustainable management of natural resources in which the *Resource Management Act* (RMA) plays an important role. The RMA combined over 60 statutes and regulations into one statute to provide a rational, comprehensive and systematic approach to decision-making involving policy analysis and plan preparation (at various levels of government), assessment of environmental effects, decision-making on proposed developments and monitoring of policy implementation and consents. At its heart was a shift away from traditional land use planning to a policy that requires individuals or groups to internalise the environmental costs of their use, development and protection of natural and physical resources.

Closely linked to the sustainable development agenda are major changes to local governments. The *Local Government Act 2002* mandates 86 councils to undertake strategic planning with a view to delivering desired economic, social, environmental, and cultural community outcomes. This act enhances

devolution by giving powers of general competence to councils with respect to relevant statutes, providing they have strong community support. There is considerable scepticism among some long-time observers of local government policy that the legislation will result in an enhanced role for local governments (Bush 2003).

Given the relatively circumscribed range of activities and services delivered by local governments, the creation of medium term strategic plans requires local governments to engage with other levels of government, the community, and the private sector, and to produce long-term council community plans no later than 2006 (LGNZ 2003). These reforms reflect many aspects of policy and management reforms in other parts of the public sector, with their focus on sustainability, enhanced democratic participation, an increased focus on outcomes and a medium term strategic perspective. A recent critique of the quality of RMA plans points to severe capability problems and governance failures, which have led to plans delivering well below original expectations (Eriksen *et al.* 2003). Given the relatively limited functions and resource base of local governments, there are concerns that the strategic planning brief for local governments under the new act may be too ambitious.

The appropriate assignment of roles and responsibilities between central and local governments has been an on-going issue, as has been the degree to which local governments should perform more functions or alternatively, limit their service delivery functions in favour of stronger policy and community governance roles (Reid 1999; Drage 2002). Central government has been reluctant to devolve power to local governments and economic and social policy development activities continue to occur both at central and local levels.

Future of work, household studies, and employment

The future of work is a broad rubric encompassing research programs on the workplace, workforce, and work-life balance and various interfaces in aspects of these, such as between household characteristics and

employment. Regional and diversity themes are strongly evident in this research. Efforts are directed to understanding unique aspects of New Zealand. Self-employment remains a dominant theme, as do issues of eldercare responsibilities, older workers' contributions in the workplace, and the government's emphasis on 'partnerships' in the employment relationships.

A large Massey University study, the Labour Market Dynamics Program, is designed to explain the dynamics of economic participation by exploring the interface between households and the labour market. Spoonley and McLaren focus on the experiences of men and women involved in non-standard working arrangements, such as fixed-term and casual employment. The program has studied the class 'knowledge workers' in depth, to help better understand the dynamics in a growing, and economically important set of occupations (Spoonley and McLaren 2003; Firkin *et al.* 2002). The researchers note that existing policy is generally tailored around more traditional forms of employment. The increase in working in non-standard ways has implications for education, family, and economic development policies.

Maani has studied Maori and other ethnic groups' incomes. She finds that financial rewards from education are greater for Maori men than for other ethnicities, that Maori women benefit more from higher levels of education than Pakeha do. In the other category, Maani notes that immigrants seem less able to translate their higher education levels into higher-paying jobs. She suggests much of the earnings gap between Maori and Pakeha with similar qualifications is due to industry and occupation choice and geographic location. Her work raises questions about how Maori and immigrants fare in New Zealand's workforce. For Maori, poor earnings can be largely explained by low qualifications, and occupation and industry choice. For immigrants, earnings can be linked to other unobservable characteristics.

In New Zealand, as in Australia, studies of families and households and research on employment change are increasingly intersecting. At both the individual and household level there is a concern with a polarisation of work, with both 'underwork'

and 'overwork' being highlighted. There has been an increase in both 'no job' and 'all job' households (Dawkins *et al.* 2002; Singley and Callister 2003). This represents a concentration of employment in particular households. This polarisation has not occurred to the same degree in the United States and has raised policy debates as to whether New Zealand's 'work-poor' households would simply be part of the 'working poor' under an alternative set of economic and social policies. Within working households there has also been identified a polarisation of hours worked, even in households raising young children.[3] While concerns about the possible effects of mothers working on the development of children have reduced, there is now a wider research and policy discussion about the ability of individuals and families to find an optimal work/life balance.[4] This includes a discussion of the role of families themselves, employers and wider social policies (such as paid parental leave and subsidised childcare) in supporting work/life balance.

In parallel, there is research being undertaken in a range of labour market issues including contingent work, employment scheduling, home work and how this affects the lives of individuals and families. There is also research investigating how changes in the labour market may be influencing the 'marriage market' and, ultimately, issues such as fertility (Sceats 2003). In both the labour market and the family research, and in its intersection, particular attention is being placed on the changing roles of men and women. Thus includes ongoing investigation of the reasons for the pay gap between women and men.

Family well-being

There has been increasing attention placed on the academic and policy-based study of family wellbeing over the past decade. The academic research has come from a variety of disciplines, notably psychology, sociology, economics, demography and education, along with multi-disciplinary public policy perspectives. Each disciplinary area has focussed on particular aspects or influences on family wellbeing.

One of the major strands of research has been on changes in family structure, especially the growth of sole parent families, where

outcomes in terms of employment, poverty, health status and child educational attainment have been adverse (Stephens 2000). The development of longitudinal studies, especially the internationally recognised Christchurch and Dunedin birth cohort studies (Fergusson 1998), which are now into their third decade of analysis, have permitted investigation into the causes of poor child outcomes and intergenerational transference of psychological and medical traits and educational achievements. The resilience and susceptibility of families to internal and external stressors has also been investigated (McKay 2003).

The impact of the economic and social reforms on family finances, especially the 1991 benefit cuts and move to market rents for state housing, has been analysed by the Poverty Measurement Project (Stephens *et al.*1995). Their work highlighted the decline in average family living standards during the 1990s, the increase in inequality and the rise in poverty (when measured on an absolute basis). Those who suffered most were families with dependent children particularly larger families, partly because they are more likely to be Maori or Pacifica where standards of living are lower, and partly because New Zealand is one of the least generous countries in the OECD in regard to cash and in-kind assistance to families with dependent children (Stephens 2003).This research on family finances has formed the backdrop to the current policy on the future directions of social security. Poverty research has also spawned related projects on deprivation indicators (Crampton *et al.* 2000), used in the allocation of needs-based funding for schools and primary health care, indicators of living standards (Jensen *et al.* 2003), and the impact of poverty on other socio-economic outcomes, especially health, housing and education(Howden-Chapman and Tobias 2000).

Finally, many dimensions in the sociology of family life have attracted researchers. The ageing population, the increase in non-standard work, and the changing composition of families, all have implications for policy. In a spate of government-funded studies on families, researchers are examining in depth topics such as pathways to well-being for teenage girls in their family-whanau settings and key transitions in the lives of Pacific Islands families.

Comparative health policy reform

New Zealand is a small country and policy proposals are often shaped by international developments. Strong evidence exists of policy transfer and learning, but also, adaptation of international models to fit the local context. Like the United Kingdom, New Zealand has experienced no less than four major restructurings to its health care system since the mid-1980s. Despite much writing and comparisons of the changes, there is limited agreement about the impacts of these changes on system performance and health outcomes (Davis and Ashton 2000; Gauld 2001).

The reform designs have followed many basic public management principles, involving the so-called purchaser-provider split, elements of management competition, and managed care. Often the models underpinning the reforms were modified significantly before being adapted for use in the New Zealand context. The reforms did far less to alter the public-private mix than is implied in the policy literature. Unlike Australia, moves to introduce greater private sector involvement have concentrated on the purchaser and provider functions, and not on funding or ownership. Despite the inheritance of many institutional health system features from Britain, the health reforms of the 1990s drew their inspiration from the Netherlands (Scott 2001). The reforms proved to be difficult to implement. Problems arose from the lack of a broad consensus with respect to policy goals and objectives, there were unrealistic expectations regarding time frames and the costs of major structural reforms, and too much reliance on the ability of system changes to delivery performance improvements.

The latest system changes have recombined purchaser and provider functions for hospitals and moves are now underway to create primary health organisations (PHOs) that link primary care providers in community settings. The Health Services Research Centre (UVW) has led a major multi-year project that has evaluated the latest health system reforms, drawing funding from both the Health Research Council and the Ministry of Health (Ashton *et*

al. 2000; Cumming and Mays 2002). The centre is also involved in the evaluation of primary health organisations currently being established.

There are similarities in New Zealand and Australia with respect to reforms to purchasing and provider roles. Both countries are keen to place greater emphasis and focus on public health and primary care, approaches to priority setting, evaluation, and strategies for public and indigenous health (Bloom 2000). Collaborations exist across the Tasman with respect to common standard for food safety and quality standards for health services. The Australia and New Zealand Health Services Research and Policy Association hold a biennial research conference; the most recent was held in November 2003 in Melbourne. Significant benefits would accrue from further research collaborations between Australia and New Zealand in the area of health system reform, priority setting and in documenting good practice models with respect to service delivery.

Economics

Economics is a discipline with a well-defined core – the logic of choice or constrained maximisation. It is also a community of scholars that has embraced globalisation but been less interested in national peculiarities. Nevertheless economists usually have no doubt about the practical utility of their research, and a good deal of their writing and publications refer to major issues of public policy. Five of the six main articles in the most recent issue of *New Zealand Economic Papers* deal with aspects of the growth of output or productivity in the New Zealand economy, while the sixth deals with the relationship between economic growth and the size and structure of government, setting New Zealand in a comparative context. The previous issue, consisted of a symposium on New Zealand macroeconomics issues, and the one before that focused on database integration and employer-employee data. There were plenty of references to New Zealand policy issues – of aggregate growth, social policy issues, student loan issue etc – but the focus of interest was in a technique of analysis.

We can identify the aspects of government in which economists are most interested. They are the central issues of policy and include the growth potential of the New Zealand economy, the cyclical experience of the New Zealand economy and especially the nature and extent of the gap between actual and potential output which is crucial for designing monetary policy decisions, the determinants of exchange rate and interest rate impacts on the domestic economy, the nature of savings and its relationship to retirement incomes and cycles of disadvantage in social policy. The same themes are to be found in the working papers of those government agencies that have active programs of economic research, (Treasury, the Reserve Bank, and the Department of Labour). Their papers extend into issues of microeconomics and to policy design – the best conceptualisation of the national balance sheet or the appropriate form of a state-owned enterprise. They also address the terms and concepts in which government strategic policy is formulated, such as the meaning of 'transformation', or the kind of 'innovation' that should be fostered. Furthermore, there is a great deal of economic research on microeconomic issues with policy aspects especially the design of policies about markets and networks in relation to electricity or telecommunications, and this research ranges from contributions to international understanding to submissions to the Commerce Commission on specific merger proposals.

Economics is a technique of analysis that can be applied to policy questions of many kinds. But it would be fair to say that the greatest interest of New Zealand economists is in the analysis rather than in the policy problems, and that there is little economic research focused directly on the processes of government, whether those of policy development or of public management.[5] The government's post-1999 policy focus on regions as engines of economic growth spurred research around the questions of what determines the spatial distribution of economic activity both among regions within a country and across international regions and how governments can influence that distribution (Skilling 2001; Box 2000; Galt 2000; Kerr and Timmins 2000).

Maori policy and development

Policy and management issues surrounding Maori development and the Treaty of Waitangi have been a priority area for academic research over several decades. The election of the fourth Labour government (1984-90), with its ambitious reform program, coincided with growing Maori aspirations for greater autonomy, revitalisation of culture and language and a more direct role in delivering services to Maori (Loomis 2000). The *Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975* provided legislation to allow new processes for the resolution of grievances and signalled a different approach to Maori policy. The new approach reflected a greater awareness of a partnership between Maori and the Crown and also, recognition of the aspirations of Maori to live as Maori (Brookfield 1999; Coates and McHugh 1998; Kawharu 1989). Since the passage of the 1975 Act, attention has focused less on giving recognition to the Treaty of Waitangi and more on what the Treaty means in practice.

The Ministry of Maori Development (Te Puni Kokiri) provides oversight of government policies and strategies for Maori. It monitors the performance of mainstream departments and reviews the impact of departmental outputs on Maori and also, the department's responsiveness to Maori. Though many outcomes for Maori development are generic, others are Maori-specific. The development of appropriate Maori specific outcome measures has drawn on academic expertise from Massey University (Durie *et al.* 2002).

The growing importance of Maori policy and development issues is reflected in the many conferences and meetings held to consider strategies for improving Maori outcomes in areas such as education, health, economic, social and cultural development and to eliminate disadvantage, foster greater Maori developments across the education and research sectors, and promote the goals of self-management and self-determination (Durie 2003). While much attention has focused on relationships between the state and Maori, of equal importance have been issues among Maori tribes, organisations and individuals. The implications of this for public sector activity have been greater tailoring of services and in some cases, options for alternative

service delivery. Specific strategies have been developed aimed at reducing disparities in outcomes between Maori and non-Maori and creating more innovative community-based strategies which enhancing Maori capability and performance.

Corruption

The issue of governmental corruption has over the years received little if any academic attention, undoubtedly because the country has enjoyed an international reputation as being virtually corruption-free. This reputation is confirmed by Transparency International's corruptions perception index, which has ranked New Zealand between first and fourth place since the introduction of the index in 1995. However, there is at least *prima facie* evidence, based on prosecutions and convictions of public officials on various corruption charges over the past few years, and also cases of dubious behaviour by a number of politicians and officials, that the corruption-free status should not be taken for granted. Obviously, the question of what constitutes corruption is important, and the international index uses a conventional definition of what can be called 'hard core' corruption. But such definitions should not be regarded as immutable, especially as public perceptions change as to what constitutes corrupt or illicit political and bureaucratic behaviour.

The State Sector Standards Board warned of the need for continued vigilance regarding corruption (State Sector Standards Board 2001), and the State Services Commissioner has consistently expressed the need for zero tolerance (State Services Commission 2000). Under legislation currently before parliament the commissioner will be given wider powers to protect standards of ethical probity across the state sector. In his annual report for the year 2000 the commissioner also expressed concern that Asian organised crime, with its ability to bribe officials with large sums of money, constituted a growing corruption threat. He noted that personal information had become a 'marketable and valuable commodity'. A 2003 report by Transparency International also recommended various legislative and institutional changes to help safeguard against increased governmental corruption, and argued

that the deep division of views over the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand society 'may represent the main challenge to the continued effectiveness of the National Integrity System' (Transparency International 2003; Maor 2004; Rothstein and Stolle 2001).

The effect of the state sector changes of the 1980s and early 90s on bureaucratic corruption remain unclear, though Gregory argues a case that aspects of these changes have indeed enhanced the prospect of increasing corruption among government officials (Gregory 1995; 1999; 2002a; 2002b). The effects of wider societal changes on levels of governmental corruption also need to be assessed.[6]

Regulatory policy and practice

Regulatory policy and practice provides grounds for academic research. For instance, an enduring theme since the first ACC legislation in 1975 has been the balance between the Woodhouse principles and the proactive, protective responsibility of the state. In both 2002 and 2003 conferences with international delegates considered a range of issues in light of the privatisation, then re-monopolisation of workers' compensation insurance. Over the last decade and a half, the trend in resource management, workplace health and safety and other areas, has been to consolidate legislation and to move from a prescriptive to an outcomes-based framework. In employment relations and health and safety, a partnership model is promoted. Research on these trends appears in a wide range of publications. In the areas of genetic modification, the regulation of hazardous substances, and bio-security, New Zealand's geographical isolation makes effective regulation highly salient. The *Report on the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification* was widely applauded internationally for its comprehensiveness and balanced approach.

Other areas of significant interest include the move to tighten the regulatory regime in the electricity and telecommunications sectors, while still maintaining a 'light-handed' touch. Recently completed research from the New Zealand Institute for Competition and Regulation, includes a cross country study of telecommunications market performance, an investigation of the economic efficiency of the privatisation of Tranzrail, and an analysis of the efficiency of contractual arrangements in private agricultural product markets. Other research at the Institute looks at the cost of capital, forward markets and other matters that can inform policy.

New Zealand is making or is poised to make substantial contributions to international debates surrounding the control of controversial goods and services such as gambling, recreational drugs, and prostitution. In the latter case, dramatic national policy change in 2003 – the passage of legislation legalising brothels – has pushed many local councils to pass a range of by-laws that attempt to define where and how brothels can operate. The variation in local responses around the country provides substantial opportunities for social research into the processes and outcomes of different control strategies.

In the case of recreational drugs, communities and governments are scrambling for effective responses to each new wave of drug fashion. Thanks to the excellent survey and analysis work of Casswell we have a fairly clear picture of New Zealanders' use of both legal and illegal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, hallucinogens, stimulants, and opiates, as well as multi-drugs. We know that cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug and the third most popular recreational drug Wilkins *et al.* 2002). Maori usage has also been documented. These patterns occur despite the fact that New Zealand law prohibits all activities associated with cannabis-related products, from production to possession and use. The apparent ineffectiveness of prohibition, combined with widespread familiarity with the drug, has fuelled periodic calls for change in the legal treatment of cannabis – although the 2002 coalition agreement put the cannabis issue off the agenda (due to the influence of United Future), it is sure to return. New Zealand researchers have contributed to the international recreational drugs literature through investigations of black markets (Wilkins and Casswell 2002; Wilkins 2001), which highlight significant differences between New Zealand's cannabis scene and that of other countries but with worrying local trends toward gang activity and sale through 'tinny' houses. In addition, the New Zealand

literature has explored policy-related dimensions of the issue (Baehler 2001; Abel and Casswell 1998a; Field and Casswell 2000).

With regard to gambling, survey research has provided detailed accounts of New Zealanders' gambling and problem gambling behaviour, with the vast majority of this work being published by the government (Abbott 2001). Combined with the growing international literature on problem gambling, this research has provided a strong foundation for policy analysis and recommendations in New Zealand (Department of Internal Affairs 2000). Emerging issues such as control of internet gambling will demand continuous updating of research findings.

Social capital and community networks

Currently New Zealand is in the midst of what the State Services Minister, Trevor Mallard (Mallard 2003), has described as a second wave of reform characterised by a concern for cohesiveness, consistency, constructive relationships, and shared values across all parts of government. Over the last five years a number of New Zealand government departments and ministries have focussed on issues of inter-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration and coordination as a means of improving outcomes.

The work of the State Services Commission, and in particular its publication *Review of the Centre*, with a resulting major work program, is a good illustration of the importance the government is giving to improving inter-agency working relationships and structures. A recent State Services Commission working paper (Dovey 2003), looks at overseas models of collaboration and how they can be applied. The work of the Community Employment Group of the Department of Labour, and the Community Policy Team of the Department of Internal Affairs, are also indicative of this move to looking at collaborative models for improving social outcomes. This sea change has also filtered down to local government level. Implicit in the recent *Local Government Act 2002* is a direction for more community involvement in strategic planning. In the welfare sector, collaboration is high on the agendas of both the Ministry of Social Development and Child Youth and Family. The findings of recent reviews such as the baseline review of the Department of Child Youth and Family[7] have pointed out that improved collaboration is one way that welfare agencies can lift their performance. The Ministry of Social Development's research publication 'Mosaics' provides some good background information on collaboration, why it is so important, and yet so often very difficult to achieve.

It seems paradoxical that while all these government agencies are focusing on the need for better collaboration and coordination, they seem to be researching and developing strategies and guidelines on intersectoral working seemingly in isolation from each other. Much of the key theoretical literature on networks is written by overseas academics such as (Rhodes 1997; Marsh 1998). One suggestion for overcoming this fragmentation of research on collaboration is to develop a single national clearinghouse for developing a body of knowledge and research on collaboration and coordination. A clearinghouse would encourage more efficient and effective use of resources, promote research and information sharing, and facilitate more utilisation of policy relevant research and information by both government and non-government agencies. A positive spin-off from such a clearinghouse could be improved networking among agencies themselves, researchers, and academics.

Research being carried out at the University of Auckland is a good example of what can be achieved by funding joint projects. The university is working with independent researchers, academics, and local government representatives across the country to look specifically at partnerships in New Zealand through their FoRST funded 'Strengthening Communities through Local Partnerships' project. The aim of this project is to examine and document the overall range, scope and effectiveness of local partnerships. It is anticipated that this in turn will underpin opportunities to strengthen local partnerships in New Zealand.[8]

For several years, social capital[9] has been of interest in New Zealand. In particular, central and local government have recognised that an understanding of social capital may contribute

to a broader analysis of policy options and issues. Policy areas have varied from education, health and justice, to industrial development, productivity and economic growth. There are an increasing number of departmental strategy documents making reference to the advantages of addressing issues of social capital in policy as a means of improving social outcomes and promoting community cohesiveness and development.[10] Conversely, promoting aspects of social capital such as networks, trust, and shared values and norms, which research shows are so important for effective collaboration, is seen as a means of addressing the fragmentation of social services. Developing strong networks among agencies is a key feature for developing social capital. It can be argued that community development and social entrepreneurship is principally about building social capital within networks to facilitate local community empowerment.

The Social Capital Program Team (including Anne Spellerberg of Statistics New Zealand and David Robinson of the Institute of Policy Studies' Voluntary Sector Program), have carried out a substantial amount of the research on social capital in New Zealand. The program team and Statistics New Zealand have undertaken some major work developing a framework for measuring social capital in New Zealand.[11] It is suggested, however, that there is still significant potential for more policy relevant research into the various aspects of social capital in New Zealand to be conducted, and a role for some central organization to bring together all existing research on social capital to make it accessible to both government and non-government agencies.

New Zealand and the Pacific

New Zealand has strong international relations expertise, with a focus on the Asia Pacific region. There is interest in the role of New Zealand in the region, both in the conventional foreign affairs arenas of defence and development aid and in light of globalisation. Others focus on the implications for domestic politics of international relations.

Summary

This selective summary shows the wide range of the existing research literature on New Zealand government. Some will say that it extends well beyond the research that is central to policy development and public management. Others will say that it goes beyond research and concerns itself with management or administration without sufficient regard to the role of ideas. This assessment of the available policy/ governmental research shows it is diverse and straddles divergent interests.

A summary statement might nevertheless be offered: academic research makes contributions to:

- the broader political context, including the structures and institutions of government, historical conditions, legislation, national characteristics;
- big policy questions, to which academic research has both informed and reacted;
- big public management and administration questions; and
- achieving continuous improvements in practice in the operation of the government sector and the implementation of government policies.

We turn now to the available signals of what research government wants.

Directed Research

We are familiar with the lobbyists' sequence: 'government says it favours X. What I want to do promotes X. Therefore, the government should finance my efforts'. It may be obvious to students of public policy that it is inadequate because some ways of promoting desirable objectives have undesired implications so that the overall impact of the intervention is undesirable, or because there are cheaper ways of achieving the desired objective. But lobbyists dismiss such thoughts and insist that they deserve support for their efforts to achieve the public good. Countering misapprehension is a worthwhile objective of research on public affairs.

Merely elucidating the objectives of governments is more problematic than often acknowledged outside the ranks of public servants for whom it is an important

professional skill. Lobbyists can take the incidental remark of a minister (or even in some circumstances of a member of a government party) as an authoritative statement of government objectives. Public policy researchers cannot be so cavalier.

Governments do make formal statements of objectives, but governments are composed of politicians and they know that statements that can be used to make persuasive cases that they have failed have political effects that they do not desire. So governments tend to be cautious. The current government has committed itself to 'Key Government Goals to Guide the Public Sector in Achieving Sustainable Development'. They were originally to 'guide public sector policy and performance' but remain at a broad level of generality:[12] They are:

* Strengthen national identity and uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Celebrate our identity in the world as people who support and defend freedom and fairness, who enjoy arts, music, movement and sport, and who value our diverse cultural heritage; and resolve at all times to endeavour to uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
* Grow an inclusive, innovative economy for the benefit of all. Develop an economy that adapts to change, provides opportunities and increases employment, and while reducing inequalities, increases incomes for all New Zealanders. Focus on the growth and innovation framework to improve productivity and sustainable economic growth.
* Maintain trust in government and provide strong social services. Maintain trust in government by working in partnerships with communities, providing strong social services for all, building safe communities and promoting community development, keeping faith with the electorate, working constructively in parliament and promoting a strong and effective public service.
* Improve New Zealanders' skills. Foster education and training to enhance and improve the nation's skills so that all New Zealanders have the best possible future in a changing world. Build on the strengthened industry training and tertiary sectors to ensure that New Zealanders are among the best-educated and most skilled people in the world.
* Reduce inequalities in health, education, employment and housing. Reduce the inequalities that currently divide our society and offer a good future for all by better co-ordination of strategies across sectors and by supporting and strengthening the capacity of Maori and Pacific Island communities. Ensure that all groups in society are able to participate fully and to enjoy the benefits of improved production.
* Protect and enhance the environment. Treasure and nurture our environment with protection for eco-systems so that New Zealand maintains a clean, green environment and builds on our reputation as a world leader in environmental issues. Focus on biodiversity and bio-security strategies.

They are far from meaningless; the second rules out a policy option favoured by some political groups of self-sufficiency and rejection of material progress, while the government's rewording of the fifth to stress reducing inequality (rather than of 'closing the gaps' between Maori and non-Maori) shows that even high-level objectives have enough specificity to require amendment.

Nevertheless, while high-level objectives may cascade through the machinery of government into more specific desired outcomes, they have only limited influence on the direction of research. They identify concepts that researchers can discuss, looking for linkages that throw light on why an objective is desirable or what are the implications of pursuing an objective in a particular way. The nature of international economic integration that underlies the concept of an open competitive economy opens up many fields of enquiry. So does the concept of an 'inclusive' society that might sound innocuous to some but is seen by others as diverting attention from issues of social stratification if not class. Research which is motivated by a desire to enhance conceptual understanding will often lead into more specific empirical enquiries – abstract reasoning in many fields is facilitated by empirical observation, and those empirical enquiries may relate to issues of interest to government

departments or agencies delivering public programs. Hence, there can be direct links between high-level government objectives and policy-related research. But the high-level objectives themselves create an agenda for researchers only in that they indicate some concepts whose discussion is more likely than others to attract public interest.

Governments do commit themselves to somewhat more specific agendas. The current Labour government has committed itself through published papers with the authority of cabinet on its objectives in relation to sustainable development and with reference to policies affecting families in the establishment of a families commission. It has also published a formal 'growth and innovation framework' and invited research on ways in which government can work with the private sector in promoting regional and industrial development. It has stated that microbiology, ICT and cultural industries are of special importance. It cannot be said with any confidence that such government statements of research priorities have great influence as signals to researchers.

The government has more influence on researchers through the processes and criteria it establishes for allocation of research funding. Government, acting on the advice especially of the Ministry of Research Science and Technology creates priorities for funds appropriated for research. There are various funds – especially the Marsden fund where the criteria emphasise qualities like innovativeness and originality, and the Public Good Science Fund where the emphasised criteria are desired socio-economic outcomes. The criteria are developed in consultation with researchers and with end-use stakeholders, but it can be difficult to see much connection to what government declared to be its high-order objectives. But it is usually only disaffected researchers who cannot see any connection.

Government also creates research agendas through questions posed as departments and agencies work on developing or implementing policy. There would be intense interest from government in any research that created simple rules about the optimal nature of the Crown balance sheet. There would be equally intense interest in research that gave greater understanding of the optimal resources for public child welfare agencies or how those resources should be managed. Answers to major questions which trouble governments are always welcome – and they remain the major questions because answers are not easy to find.

When VUWSoG was established in 2002, chief executives of government departments were interviewed and asked about the major issues facing them. Every department had its own list, related to its area of responsibility, but there were some common themes. Because it was chief executives being interviewed, the common themes were matters of strategic policy management, problem areas that overlapped policy issues with matters of public management. The three leading themes were:

- Problems which cut across conventional categorisation of policy areas and which required responses from more than a single agency – the 'whole of government' interest in 'wicked issues', the challenges to 'joined-up government';
- Problems which required co-operation or collaboration between public sector and some kind of community organisation – at the abstract end this could become a matter of the nature and legitimacy of governance while at the other extreme, it was a matter of efficient service delivery;
- Recognition of a growing need to conceptualise policy issues and responses to them in an international rather than a national framework – policy development in New Zealand could be rendered inappropriate if it did not take account of international obligations or the international implications of decisions taken here.

These themes establish a classification system that can be used to identify how specific research projects are likely to contribute to pressing issues across the public sector. They derive from officials rather than elected government, but of course the priorities of the government tend to press heavily on the concerns of chief executives of government departments.

But they are not the only such strong pressures. Ministers respond to public and media interest. The public and media are predisposed to be interested in scandals and failures. Governments want a public service which is equipped to answer questions when

ministers ask them – and which therefore has to engage in preparatory work before those questions occur to ministers while satisfying ministers that their priorities are getting proper attention. Governments want a public service that is innovative, able to respond to new challenges and not merely to continue familiar routines. Innovation and flexibility flows from learning by doing, and learning by doing involves making changes when it is apparent that improvement is probably possible. And change can easily be portrayed by the public or media, let alone a by political opponent, as scandal or failure.

A major challenge for the public service is to create trust among ministers and the public such that innovation is welcomed. The broadest agenda of public management and public policy is not the rather conceptual categorisation of 'joined up government', 'government-community interactions', or the international-national nexus, but creating a public sector with a reputation such that difficult issues can be approached in a creative and flexible manner. That line of thinking gives a high priority to research about the nature of ethical systems and of community trust. It promotes research of a conceptual kind not unlike the high-level objectives of government.

If we took the approach of social science researchers outside the public service, we would be more likely to reflect on the same set of research questions and see common threads through categories familiar to disciplinary discussions – risk, children, governance, integration/co-ordination/outcomes, public-private split, and knowledge society. Whichever broad approach we take, we find a number of discussions where research interacts with policy and public management debate.

A key challenge for both universities and the public sector is to find constructive ways in which the priorities of governments can be aligned with the research priorities and incentives of academics and others. Researchers can assist the public sector to build and maintain its capability in terms of knowledge and skills required to address the changing public sector environment. Critical to the future of the Westminster system is that public servants can faithfully serve the government of the day while maintaining a medium and long-term focus and building the capability to serve future governments.

There is no doubt that sometimes governments and academics have difficulty working across institutional barriers. Career structures do not facilitate exchange and movement between government, academia and research institutes and think tanks. Such arrangements do not help governments to develop high powered academic researchers who can focus on real world issues and make important connections between the world of ideas and the practical applications in the world of public sector policy and management decision-making. If we want to grow knowledge and capability we may need to examine the reward for academics and others who decide to focus their research energies on real world policy and management issues, rather than sticking to the narrow path of research and publication in discipline-based academic journals. Wicked issues are rarely solved with the insights of a single discipline and as the old saying goes, 'if the only tool you have is a hammer, then all your problems seem like nails'. More effective linkages between universities and the public sector is critical to any ANZSOG-focused research strategy and must start from problems and issues defined by end-users and not be driven by specific research activities which cannot offer effective links between theory and practice. The gulf between academia and the public service is much wider than it needs to be. To some extent, this may reflect limited awareness of the comparative advantage that each group can bring to the examination of key policy and management priorities of government agencies.

It is more common to think and discuss the knowledge management and R&D requirements of private industry than it is to reflect on similar requirements in the public sector context. More transparent and open government, more complex political coalitions which broker relationships across diverse policy settings and associated ideologies can create an environment in which some of the merits of a more stable if not permanent public service of the Westminster variety may not be fully exploited. Some departments have reported that they are less able to shelter deep thinkers within their organisations than in former times. In some societies, including Australia, there is a greater role for think tanks and contract research to support policy

development. Some public sector agencies were quick to embrace moves to establish e-government web portals and to pool data and information across agencies. However, many organisations have yet to establish a robust R&D and knowledge management strategy to support 'the business of government'. The development of scenarios, futures work and environmental scanning are part of a growing set of tools that governments must employ if they are to rise to the challenge of fostering governance appropriate to the 21st century and beyond. The creation of ANZSOG was itself part of a growing awareness that the public sector needs to invest more in building the knowledge, skills and capability to address the challenges of governance in the 21st century.

Governments are attempting to make public sector analysis and advice more evidence-based, medium-term, and strategic. It would be useful for academics to examine the role of information, evidence, and methods as inputs to policy development and decision-making in the public sector. It is far easier to declare that policy advice is evidence-based than it is to have policy analysts and advisers who are able to learn from international experience while also having the ability to adjust and tailor advice to fit the specific local circumstances and context. Much is said about embedding best practice in public sector agencies; however, a more appropriate goal is to foster creativity and innovation to develop appropriate new skills, including the skill to create practice that is appropriate to a specific context.

The existence of several jurisdictions within the ANZSOG family provides an ideal natural laboratory in which to examine and assess policy approaches and strategies in diverse institutional contexts. Pressure for greater involvement by citizens in the democratic process has changed policy processes. Policy making is now more complex as governments try to act in ways which are appropriate in a democratically elected government while also managing to engage with citizens and stakeholders throughout the policy development and implementation process. Governments need to reflect continuously on their appropriate role in society, if they are to ensure that they are delivering public value.

Final Reflections

Despite the trend toward evidence-based policy based on the best available information, government is often not investing sufficiently in the provision of such information. A major task of policy makers is to assess what information is likely to be required in the future and to invest the resources needed to ensure that the information will be available when required. The ideal is easily stated, but it is the ideal since it is hard to achieve. There is an obvious tension or trade-off between investing resources to generate the information that may be needed in the future, and performing some activity that contributes immediately to some current government objective. This is a standard investment issue, but the pay-off from future information is likely to be highly uncertain – whether the information can be obtained at all, whether it will turn out that the right information was sought – even before some parties begin to wonder whether they are really much concerned about the future.

Managing the research process poses difficulties. Researchers have their own views on what is important or interesting. Managing people is not easy; it is even more problematic to manage professionals or any individuals who can appeal to some ethic that is not entirely the same as either the government's objectives or the standard public service ethos. Researchers are not unique but they are difficult, and the more creative they are, the more likely they are to be difficult.

Government objectives are likely to be mixed. On the one hand, there is obvious attraction in harnessing research capability to the government's own program, whether its strategic objectives or its immediate goals. Reflective politicians and officials will be aware of the dangers of centralisation; putting all resources on a single track is high risk and the track is only too likely to be a dead end. Diversity within governments will invariably exert itself. And, other research efforts will sprout outside any centralised effort. In New Zealand, there are two particularly important competing pressures. One is that the government's goals include educational ones. It is aware of the importance of enhanced learning for all to goals of economic growth and evolution of a participatory democracy.

Educational policies will always have a strong component of increasing capacity to deal with change, and learning programs will lead to opportunities to cope with new knowledge. Educational institutions will include research that plugs the New Zealand system into emerging new knowledge as part of educational policies. This guarantees that dreams of harnessing research capabilities to the agenda of public policy and public management will remain exactly that – dreams. The only debate is whether they should be better called nightmares.

The second guarantee that a coherent, co-ordinated approach to research capability has limited potential in New Zealand is that governments are keen to work beside community groups. The policy imperative relates to finding a productive relationship between government and relevant groups in the private sector, whether business, NGO, or local communities. The political imperative is that governments are concerned about electoral trends. Both point in the same direction. The diverse nature of modern communities guarantees that there will be interest in research other than the top priorities of those seeking the best possible public policy and public management systems.

There is a strong case for those with overlapping research interests, whether as commissioners or as suppliers, knowing about each other's efforts. There is a case for ensuring that there are institutions for facilitating and financing different kinds of research and for research collaboration.

Conclusion

Our review of research on and by the New Zealand government suggests that there are certain directions in which ANZSOG research could fruitfully proceed. We take it as given that the research should be trans-Tasman in nature, and should both draw on and foster networks of researchers in Australian and New Zealand universities, and the networks of ANZSOG itself. There is obvious appeal in putting a lot of emphasis on the integration of ANZSOG teaching and research. We favour an emphasis on the development of cases suitable for teaching purposes. They should be varied in nature, and extend across the whole range of

government policy and management, from the formulation of broad government strategies to management of particular government services.

We observe that there is an enormous array of possibilities for research on New Zealand government and we know the same is true of Australian governments. We think ANZSOG needs to consider two things when shaping its research agenda: first, an understanding of government priorities, including the best possible assessment of future government priorities; and second an assessment of its own capabilities including what might engender interest and commitment across its network. ANZSOG has the advantage of both academic and government arms, and it should take advantage of this so that the choice of research priorities flows from dialogue.

Notes

[1] The research assistance of Malakai Jiko is gratefully acknowledged.

[2] For example John Jensen, Vasantha Krishnan, Matt Spittal, and Sathi Sathyandra.

[3] For example in Australia Burbidge, A. and Sheehan, P. 2001 The polarisation of families, in J. Borland, B. Gregory and P. Sheehan (eds.), *Work rich, work poor: Inequality and economic change in Australia,* Melbourne: Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, Victoria University, 119-141; in New Zealand Callister. P (in progress).

[4] For example see http://www.dol.govt.nz/futureofwork/worklife.asp

[5] The nearest approach to a counter-example is the report by an international monetary economist on the constitution, management and operations of the Reserve Bank. Even there one gets the sense that there is a sense of relief as the topic moves away from administrative detail to abstract questions of credibility and transmission of monetary influences.

[6] Relevant international literature includes Bjornskov, C 2003 Corruption and Social Capital, *Working Paper 03-13*,

[7] Ministry of Social Development, Child Youth and Family and The Treasury, 2003 *Report of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services – First Principles Baseline Review*

[8] See their website http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/lpg/ for more information.

[9] Social capital is a contested term, with differing views on the extent to which it can be measured,

let alone built effectively though public policy interventions.[68] While there is no single definition of the term 'social capital', Spellerberg's definition seems particularly relevant for the policy context. She defines it as "relationships among actors (individuals, groups, and/or organisations) that create a capacity to act for mutual benefit or a common purpose". Social capital is, therefore, a resource embodied in the relationships among people.

[10] See for example Ministry of Social Development 2003 *Family Resilience and Good Child Outcomes – a Review of the Literature*

[11] See Statistics New Zealand 2001 'A Framework for the Measurement of Social Capital in New Zealand' http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino

[12] From http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/publications/ key_goals.html downloaded 7 May 2003

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New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has said her country has "done what few countries have been able to do" and contained the community spread of Covid-19 and can start easing its lockdown measures. As the BBC's Shaimaa Khalil writes, the country's success - and Ardern's leadership - have won it global attention. On 13 March, New Zealand was about to mark the first anniversary of the Christchurch shooting with a national memorial event. During the next two weeks of lockdown, New Zealand saw a steady decline in the number of new cases. To date, it has had 12 deaths, and has confirmed that on average each infected person is passing the virus to fewer than one other person. Surveying in New Zealand. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. James Cook map 1770 and modern. Thevenot - Hollandia Nova detecta 1644 and Map of Pacific Ocean â€" "Mare Del Sud, detto altrimenti Mare Pacifico." 1690. Sketch of Dusky Bay in New Zealand; 1773 and Plan of the town and part of the settlement of New Plymouth, 1850. Cartography of New Zealand began with the arrival of Abel Tasman in the 17th century.[1] It has developed in incremental steps till the integration of New Zealand into a globally integrated system based on the New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000. YouTube Encyclopedic. 1/5. New Zealand has announced a suite of proposals aimed at outlawing smoking for the next generation and moving the country closer to its goal of being smoke-free by 2025. The plans include the gradual increase of the legal smoking age, which could extend to a ban on the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to anyone born after 2004, making smoking effectively illegal for that generation. The government acknowledged this was a risk in its document outlining proposals: â€œEvidence indicates that the amount of tobacco products being smuggled into New Zealand has increased substantially in recent years and organised criminal groups are involved in large-scale smuggling,â€ it said. New Zealand is a small, stable, and peaceful country. The corruption rate in the country is low as well. However, the terrorist attacks on Muslim places of worship in March 2019 have shocked the nation. Social environment is the next element to address in the PESTEL analysis of New Zealand. The total population of New Zealand is 4.7 million as of March 2019 (BBC, 2019). New Zealand is a culturally diverse nation, and according to a research conducted by The Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Researchâ€™s (CACR) in 2012, 89% of New Zealanders agree that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different races, religions and cultures (Victoria University of Wellington, 2019). Source: Stats NZ, New Zealand Period Life Tables 2012â€"14. StatLink 2 https://doi.org/10.1787/888933948549. Economic growth has stabilised. The New Zealand Government is applying a well-being approach to policy and budget decision-making with the objective of lifting New Zealandersâ€™ well-being. Their approach embraces the whole of government, with agencies working together to achieve well-being objectives, a focus on inter-generational outcomes and moving to broader measures of success.