

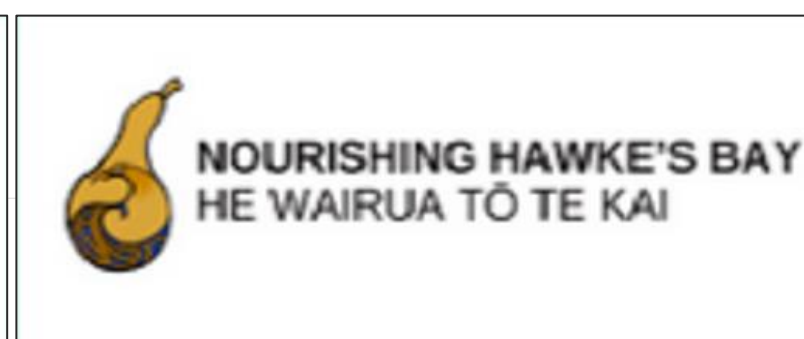
# Ka Ora, Ka Ako – Value for Investment

- Preliminary findings of a study funded by *National Sciences Challenge – A Better Start*
- Uses the Value for Investment analysis system developed by Dr Julian King
- Part of *Nourishing Hawke's Bay: He wairua tō te kai* project evaluating Ka Ora, Ka Ako

National  
**SCIENCE**  
Challenges

A BETTER  
START

E Tipu e Rea



## The context for Ka Ora, Ka Ako

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- **Substantial food insecurity** – Currently 21% of children (35% for Māori, 40% for Pacific) live in households with food insecurity
  - **Poor childhood nutritional health** – Currently 33% of children (45% for Māori, 51% for Pacific) have overweight or obesity
  - **Low and declining education achievement** – Students with food insecurity are 2-4 school years behind in PISA scores compared to food secure students (adjusted for socio-economic status)
  - **Post-Covid economic recovery** – Substantial government investment has helped to maintain the economy during and post Covid pandemic with many projects (including Ka Ora, Ka Ako) receiving large funding boosts
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## Ka Ora, Ka Ako programme roll out

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- **Pilot project** initiated as part of effort to reduce food insecurity under the Child and Youth Wellbeing strategy in 2019
  - Designed as free, daily, healthy, and universal (to avoid food poverty stigma)
  - Pilot roll out in 3 tranches in primary and intermediate schools in 3 regions in 2020
- **Massive expansion** to one quarter of students using the Covid economic recovery funding from 2021
  - Includes 25% of students in primary, intermediate, and secondary schools with the most disadvantaged Equity Index rankings from 2021
  - By September 2022, it was feeding 225,000 children in 981 schools (now >1000)
- **Evaluations** – 3 published impact evaluations by Standard of Proof and 2 kaupapa Māori evaluations by Mana Pounamu Consulting (1 published) funded by MoE, plus independent evaluations, plus MoE routine and supplier contract monitoring

# Purpose of Ka Ora, Ka Ako (based on Cabinet papers)

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**Government high-level priorities:** Addressing food insecurity and hunger; Improving child and youth wellbeing; Stimulating local economies; Reducing barriers to education

## Programme purposes

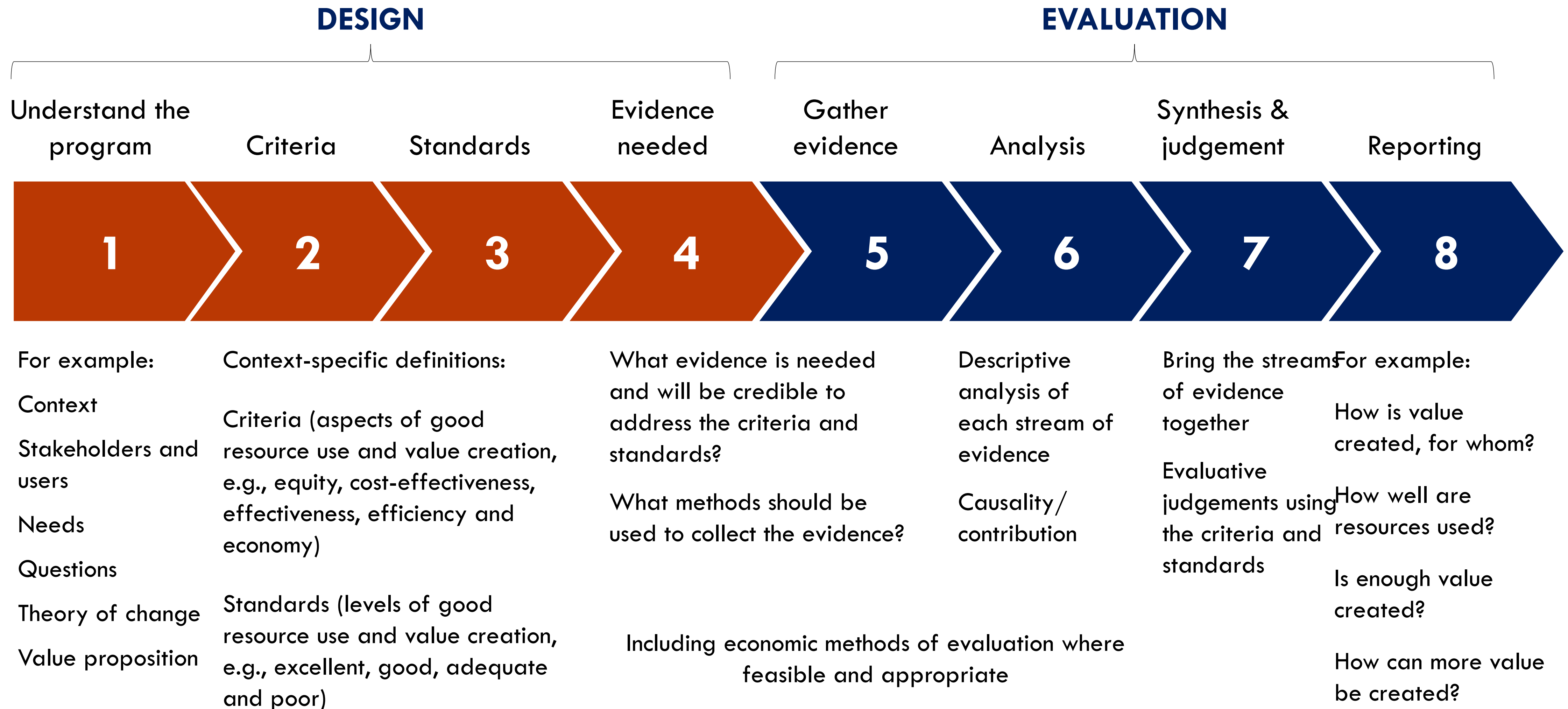
1. Alleviate hunger in schools (and reduce material hardship in disadvantaged households)
  2. Improve child nutrition (and, long-term, influence food choices in adulthood and health outcomes)
  3. Increase quality, local job opportunities (including supporting Covid economic recovery)
  4. Reduce barriers to education (and, medium to long term, improve education outcomes)
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# This 'Value for Investment' evaluation of Ka Ora, Ka Ako

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- **THIS PRESENTATION IS OF PRELIMINARY DATA – STAKEHOLDER VALIDATIONS TO BE COMPLETED**
- **Value for Investment** is an approach to return-on-investment analyses
  - It uses stakeholder judgements on what constitutes 'value', what the standards and criteria are for measuring that value, and what ratings (excellent, good, adequate, poor) should be applied to each criterion and sub-criterion
  - It uses values which can be monetised or otherwise quantified, but it also includes important values which can only be qualified in the analysis
- **This study**
  - 3 stakeholder workshops (2 with community/school stakeholders, 1 with MoE/MoH) have been conducted but two further workshops are planned for final assessments

# 8-step process for Value for Investment analyses



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inter-disciplinary | mixed methods | evaluative reasoning | participatory

# VALUE PROPOSITION: For Ka Ora, Ka Ako

*From Hawke's Bay community stakeholders and Ministries of Education and Health*



## IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### Through:

- Alleviating hunger at school
- Improving eating patterns of students and whānau
- Improving access to healthy foods
- Helping students to attain healthy growth
- Improved diet-related health outcomes (dental health, NCD risks)
- Improving mental health
- Improving mana and self-esteem
- Improving cultural identity by:
  - embedding Mātauranga Māori,
  - preventing poverty stigma,



## IMPROVED LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Through:

- Alleviating hunger at school and improving students' and whānau food security
- Improving students' nutritional status
- Targeting schools most in need
- Reducing the stigma of poverty (through universality design)
- Embedding manaakitanga and environmentally-sensitive nutrition education in the curriculum.
- Increasing educational attainment and classroom engagement
- Improving attendance through removing food insecurity-related barriers and improving motivation
- Increasing high-school retention



## IMPROVED LOCAL ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION

### Through:

- Investing in distribution infrastructure and economically viable systems to include local food in lunches
- Enacting procurement policies to support sustainable and local content of school lunches and including Iwi procurement



## IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

### Through:

- Embedding sustainability considerations in meal planning
- Embedding sustainability in procurement and contract policies
- Reducing packaging and food waste (including collaboration with food rescue organisations)
- Linking to education about sustainability
- Including more locally produced foods
- Supporting more small-scale producers



A healthy, tasty, sustainable, equitable, free school lunch system that contributes to improving food security, nutritional health and wellbeing, learning outcomes, environmental sustainability, and local economies and communities.

## ECONOMY

Resources are well managed through procurement/provision/distribution policies and practices

Fair balance of cost to govt vs quality of lunches, pay for staff and profit for providers

## EFFICIENCY

Certainty of continuity of the programme

Productive delivery (delivering healthy, safe, sufficient, locally-based meals, on time, within budget)

Optimal level of food surplus and minimal level of food and packaging waste

Efficiencies in design and continuous quality improvement systems in place

Systems in place to prioritise local sustainable procurement and meal planning

## EFFECTIVENESS

Alleviating hunger at schools

Healthy eating (lunches are healthy, safe, and high quality; promote healthy eating habits and food culture)

Improved diet-related outcomes (mental health, healthy weight, dental health,)

Reduced financial burden on disadvantaged households

Strengthened local economies (local employment at living wage, local and Iwi-centred procurement and distribution)

Reduced barriers to education and improved long-term educational outcomes (attendance, classroom engagement, educational attainment, high-school retention, curriculum links including mātauranga Māori, sustainability and nutrition)

Improved mana and self-esteem

Improved community cohesion (whānau engagement with schools, improved cultural identity through food)

Increased food system resilience (% local food in lunches, strong and short supply lines, access to healthy affordable foods)

Lunch menus, packaging and operations are sustainable

## EQUITY

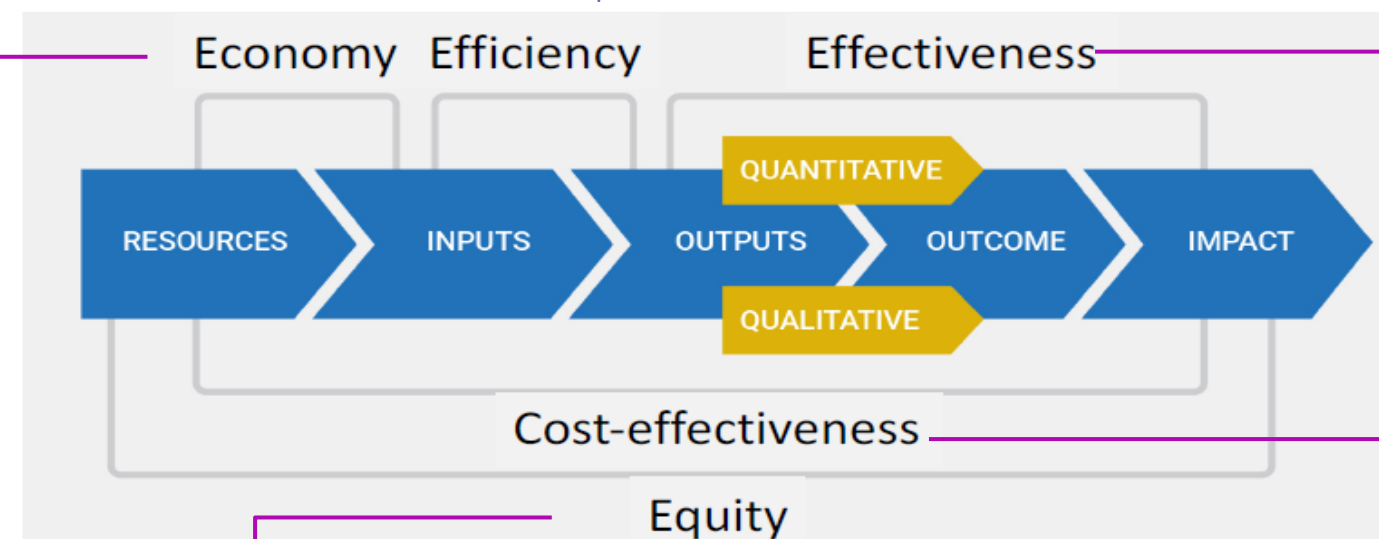
Across schools: the programme resources and targets schools to reach the students most in need

Within schools: design minimises food poverty stigma

Provisions for tailoring to school needs with policies and support systems for smaller schools and small-scale suppliers

What did we put in?

What did we get out?



Cost-effectiveness

Equity

Was it worth it?

## COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The programme creates more value than it consumes based on break-even analysis of monetisable investments and benefits, and qualitative consideration of intangibles

# 5-E framework for value proposition



# Standards

Table 1: Generic standards (King & OPM, 2018)

Standard	Generic definition
Excellent	Meeting or exceeding all reasonable expectations/targets bearing in mind context. Room for incremental improvements.
Good	Generally meeting reasonable expectations/targets, allowing for minor exceptions. Some improvements needed.
Adequate	Not meeting expectations/targets but fulfilling minimum requirements and showing acceptable progress overall. Significant improvements needed.
Poor	Not fulfilling minimum requirements or not showing acceptable progress overall. Urgent improvements needed.

# EFFECTIVENESS: (Achieving the desired outcomes/values) 1/5

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## 1. Alleviating hunger at school

- Large reductions in hunger, especially among food insecure students; [strong support from international literature from high income countries]
- **Provisional assessment: Excellent**

## 2. Healthy eating

- Lunches are nutritious and 78% of nutrients meet >1/3 of daily requirements; high food safety; quality measures in place for acceptability, age-appropriateness, and culturally appropriateness; food quality KPIs in provider contracts; qualitative evidence and anecdotal evidence of some improvements in eating habits and opportunities for food cultural practices (tikanga and manaakitanga); [international literature shows improved long-term eating behaviours]
- **Provisional assessment: Excellent**

# EFFECTIVENESS: (Achieving the desired outcomes/values) 2/5

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## 3. Improved diet-related outcomes

- Large improvements in mental health and wellbeing indicators, especially among food insecure students (9-20% improvements); no NZ data on healthy weight; no discernible impact on dental health in Hawke's Bay; [international literature supports mental health outcomes, potential effect on weight and growth]
- **Provisional assessment:** Good (excellent for mental health)

## 4. Reduced financial burden on disadvantaged households

- Annual household savings between \$1000 (one child in primary school) and \$5000 (3 children in secondary school); qualitative findings of reduced hardship, food insecurity and time burden from focus groups and in-depth interviews with whānau; [international literature strongly supports these findings]
  - **Provisional assessment:** Excellent
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# EFFECTIVENESS: (Achieving the desired outcomes/values) 3/5

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## 5. Strengthened local economies

- >2,455 new jobs (>½ are fulltime, all living wage) created by March 2022; >180 business providers; Māori business providers supply 126 schools + iwi/hapu model supplies 40 schools; technical support in place for small businesses; [international literature in high-income countries shows increased local cashflow, increased employment and higher lifetime income for children exposed to the programme]
- **Provisional assessment:** Excellent

## 6. Reduced barriers to education and improved long-term educational outcomes

- Qualitative studies support reduced barriers to attendance and classroom engagement. After programme introduction, school-reported 'Positive shift in student attendance' (59-64%), 'Positive shift in student engagement' (73-83%), 'Positive shift in student behaviour' (66-74%), 'Positive shift in student achievement' (46-53%). Interim evaluation showed no difference in school absenteeism but recent 'deep dive' evaluation reported extra 3 days/year attendance for underserved children; strong impact (equivalent 2-4 years learning) of food insecurity on PISA and TIMSS scores; no NZ data on education outcomes or high-school retention from the programme; no formal curriculum links [international literature strongly supports these improved engagement and long-term improved education outcomes]
- **Provisional assessment:** Good (but long-term data on educational outcomes needs to be collected)

# EFFECTIVENESS: (Achieving the desired outcomes/values) 4/5

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## 7. Improved mana and self-esteem

- Qualitative evidence for the programme being mana-enhancing, promoting self-esteem and the universality design prevents food poverty stigma; improved mental health outcomes (9-20% in food insecure students); [international literature supports these findings]
- **Provisional assessment:** Excellent

## 8. Improved community cohesion

- Qualitative evidence of increased whānau/hapu/iwi engagement with schools (family-friendly employment, hapu/iwi provider models); provider engagement with school and students in their KPIs; [international literature supports the potential for increased community engagement with schools and strengthened community cohesion]
  - **Provisional assessment:** Good
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# EFFECTIVENESS: (Achieving the desired outcomes/values) 5/5

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## 9. Increased food system resilience

- Likely stronger local 'food ecosystems'; ~90% of school are supplied by local providers; no data on % of local food or 'food miles' of lunches; no data on the programme's impact on stimulating increased community access to healthy, affordable foods; potential for food resilience in emergencies. [international literature supports evidence that school food programmes stimulate relationships, diversity, adaptability, and local food system resilience]
- **Provisional assessment:** Adequate (but more data is needed on local supply and food ecosystem)

## 10. Lunch menus, packaging, and operations are sustainable

- Sustainability KPIs in new (2024) supplier contracts for waste minimisation plan and measurement of food and packaging waste to landfill; resources on website; No policies or guidelines on sustainable menu planning; [international literature shows the power of the procurement policies on increasing the sustainability credentials of providers and suppliers]
- **Provisional assessment:** Adequate (but menu guidance, supplier support, and procurement policies for sustainability are needed)

# ECONOMY: 'Buying inputs of appropriate quality at the right price'

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## 11. Resources are well managed through procurement/provision/distribution policies and practices

- Adherence to the NZ Government procurement policy 'Achieving Broader Outcomes from Government Procurement' including: involvement of NZ businesses in contract opportunities (including Māori, Pasifika, and regional businesses, as well as social enterprises); at least 8% contracts awarded to Māori businesses; ensuring living wage for catering contracts; assessing and reducing GHG emissions and waste.
- Multiple internal policies (eg 'Managing performance issues with external suppliers') and relationship management processes with suppliers
- **Provisional assessment:** Excellent

## 12. Fair balance of cost to govt vs quality of lunches, pay for staff, and profit for providers

- Lunch quality: very rare complaints on menu appeal (88) and quality (201) since Nov 2021 (from ~1M lunches/week)
- Pay for staff: Employment at least at living wage (procurement provisions)
- Profit for suppliers: Close calibration of pricing/lunch each term to inflation
- Flexibility: Options for small and remote providers
- **Provisional assessment:** Excellent

# EFFICIENCY: 'How well are inputs converted into outputs?' 1/3

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## 13. Certainty of continuity of the programme

- Programme has been funded year-on-year from Covid recovery funding with no certainty of ongoing funding; substantial school and provider feedback that lack of continuity is a major barrier to investing in systems, people, supply chains, and equipment for improved efficiency.
- **Provisional assessment:** Poor

## 14. Productive delivery of healthy, safe, sufficient, appealing, locally-based meals, on time, within budget

- Lunches meet nutrition guidelines; lunches mostly provide >1/3 daily nutrient needs; provision for special dietary needs; food safety systems and all suppliers meet standards; standards to ensure sufficient portions and student acceptability; rare food safety and suitability incident reports (56) ; ~90% of schools supplied by local providers; rare incident reports on late deliveries over (91 over 2.5y); high mean ratings of programme success from schools (4.5/5) and suppliers (4.7/5); detailed logistics for delivery determined for each supplier; staying within budget allocations despite increases in payments per lunch to providers following inflation adjustments.
- **Provisional assessment:** Excellent



# EFFICIENCY: 'How well are inputs converted into outputs?' 2/3

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## 15. Optimal level of food surplus and minimal level of food and packaging waste

- School survey results: Average food surplus (untouched lunches) now <10% (previous max was 14%); Of the surplus, 58% goes to students in need, 21% goes to food rescue organisations, 9% managed by supplier, 11% other.
- Provider survey results: Average food surplus <5%. Of the surplus, 56% is stored/distributed by schools, 28% goes to food rescue organisations, 6% goes to landfill, 10% other.
- Public food service sector suggested surplus should be ~7%
- Food waste (part eaten lunches) and packaging waste to landfill: no data, but included in new supplier KPIs
- New systems have been trialled and implemented for more closely matching the number of lunches with the number of students expected on the day and measuring surplus lunches daily
- All providers have waste minimisation plans and multiple resources and guidance materials available on Ka Ora, Ka Ako website
- **Provisional assessment: Excellent**

# EFFICIENCY: 'How well are inputs converted into outputs?' 3/3

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## 16. Efficiencies in design and continuous quality improvement systems in place

- Within-school universality (provision of lunches to all students) is a highly efficient design.
- Monitoring surveys of schools and providers each term (eg uptake, surplus, satisfaction); detailed contracts and KPIs for providers with performance management provisions; substantial technical support; incident reports; complaints register and processes; regular MoE monitoring (eg absenteeism, stand downs); programme evaluations (4 completed, 1 near completion); nutrition evaluation; menu reviews against standards; adjustment of per lunch payments each term based on inflation.
- **Provisional assessment: Excellent**

## 17. Systems in place to prioritise local sustainable procurement and meal planning

- Some sustainability provisions in the provider contract KPIs (waste minimisation plans, surplus and waste monitoring); carbon footprint of lunches completed; sustainability support materials and guidelines on Ka ora, Ka Ako website; no regular assessments of menus.
  - **Provisional assessment: Good (sustainability of menus needs more focus)**
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# EQUITY: 'How fairly are benefits distributed?' 1/2

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## 18. Across schools: the programme resources and targets schools to reach the students most in need

- Programme design uses Equity Index to identify the schools with the most disadvantaged students; 25% of students attend eligible schools; the programme is not stopped if a school's Equity Index rises above the 25% threshold.
- The majority (~60%) of students from households with food insecurity are NOT covered by the programme.
- **Provisional assessment:** Adequate (good given the budget, but most students in need miss out on lunches)

## 19. Within schools: design minimises food poverty stigma

- Universality design (provision of lunches to all students within the school) minimises food poverty stigma.
  - **Provisional assessment:** Excellent
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## EQUITY: 'How fairly are benefits distributed?' 2/2

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### **20. Provisions for tailoring to school needs with policies and support systems for smaller schools and small-scale suppliers**

- Several delivery models available and flexibility in design, particularly for schools with challenging circumstances (eg remoteness, special needs schools).
- Support systems for schools in setting up their model and tailoring to school needs.
- Support systems and flexibility for small suppliers (eg training, sourcing expertise like nutrition, reducing administrative burden)
- Very little negative feedback in school and provider surveys on design and support issues apart from some push-back on programme rigidity around events (eg Matariki, cultural days)
- **Provisional assessment: Excellent**

# COST-EFFECTIVENESS: 'How much impact does the programme have relative to the inputs invested in it?'

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## 21. The programme creates more value than it consumes based on break-even analysis of monetisable investments and benefits, and qualitative consideration of intangibles

- Investment of ~\$325M/year
- Monetisable benefits depend on time horizon; formal analyses not done for Ka Ora, Ka Ako; [international evidence: Canadian analysis suggests a 2.5-7x benefit, Swedish study found substantial health gains and long-term income].
- Many intangible benefits, eg 14% increase in mental wellbeing among the students with food insecurity
- **Provisional assessment:** Adequate (but needs NZ cost-effectiveness analyses)

# Preliminary assessments of Value for Investment for Ka Ora, Ka Ako

CRITERIA	SUBCRITERIA (primary outcomes in red)	ASSESSMENT
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	Alleviating hunger at schools	EXCELLENT
	Healthy eating (lunches are healthy, safe, and high quality; promote healthy eating habits and food culture)	EXCELLENT
	Improved diet-related outcomes (mental health, healthy weight, dental health)	GOOD
	Reduced financial burden on disadvantaged households	EXCELLENT
	Strengthened local economies (local employment at living wage, local and Iwi-centred procurement and distribution)	EXCELLENT
	Reduced barriers to education and improved long-term educational outcomes (attendance, classroom engagement, educational attainment, high-school retention, curriculum links including mātauranga Māori, sustainability and nutrition)	GOOD
	Improved mana and self-esteem	EXCELLENT
	Improved community cohesion (whānau engagement with schools, improved cultural identity through food)	GOOD
	Increased food system resilience (% local food in lunches, strong and short supply lines, access to healthy affordable foods)	ADEQUATE
	Lunch menus, packaging and operations are sustainable	ADEQUATE
<b>ECONOMY</b>	Resources are well managed through procurement/provision/distribution policies and practices	EXCELLENT
	Fair balance of cost to govt vs quality of lunches, pay for staff and profit for providers	EXCELLENT
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	Certainty of continuity of the programme	POOR
	Productive delivery (delivering healthy, safe, sufficient, locally-based meals, on time, within budget)	EXCELLENT
	Optimal level of food surplus and minimal level of food and packaging waste	EXCELLENT
	Efficiencies in design and continuous quality improvement systems in place	EXCELLENT
	Systems in place to prioritise local sustainable procurement and meal planning	GOOD
<b>EQUITY</b>	Across schools: the programme resources and targets schools to reach the students most in need	ADEQUATE
	Within schools: design minimises food poverty stigma	EXCELLENT
	Provisions for tailoring to school needs with policies and support systems for smaller schools and small-scale suppliers	EXCELLENT
<b>COST-EFFECTIVENESS</b>	The programme creates more value than it consumes based on break-even analysis of monetisable investments and benefits, and qualitative consideration of intangibles	ADEQUATE

# Summary and conclusions

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- **Summary**
    - **21 assessment areas: 12 Excellent; 4 Good; 4 Adequate; 1 Poor**
    - Overall, very good performance with many improvements underway
  - **Conclusions**
    - Main areas for improvement:
      - Get programme onto a secure funding system
      - Create a future vision to cover all children in need, which will mean including all schools
      - Build in sustainability including through menu planning and procurement policies
      - Undertake a formal cost-effectiveness study
      - Include monitoring long term educational and health outcomes
  - **Note:** These are preliminary evaluations, awaiting stakeholder input and judgements
-