

# Inspiring Communities' Governance and Operational Model



*Inspiring Communities' Governance Board, 2021.*

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## Understanding Ourselves and This Journey

*Hei whakamārama i a tātou me tō tātou rerenga*

*Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi*

*With your contribution and mine the community will flourish*

Inspiring Communities (IC) is the reference point for community-led development (CLD) in Aotearoa. Our vision is an Aotearoa where all communities flourish, with our mission focused on increasing the capacity of communities to thrive through effective community-led change.

We currently support and connect across a network of around 2500 people, organisations and initiatives also passionate about locally-led action and leadership. To enable our vision and mission, we operate a mixed source funding model. This means our work is funded from a wide range of grant and enterprise funded sources. We understand our work as being primarily in the 'commons' and for the public good.

Ko ngā pae tāwhiti, whāia kia tata. Our work is 'about us' and 'not about us' – this means while we act like an organisation, we equally think like a movement in all we do. We exist to add value and be of value to communities and create a new paradigm that enables and supports community-led approaches to thrive.

Our decade long journey has seen IC built in a participatory way. Complexity thinking has been shaping our understanding of how change happens. We respond to energy and opportunity within broader social change systems which we also seek to empower and influence. We understand Inspiring Communities as part of this complex, adaptive system, with our organisational form reflecting the need to remain attuned and responsive to what's needed in real time.

## Inspiring Communities as a TEAL organisation

*Ko ngā pae tata, whakamaua kia tina*

Established as a virtual organisation, a small network of highly skilled and CLD passionate contractors (the IC Team) has been at the heart of Inspiring Communities from the very start. A strong, shared sense of purpose, trust, relationship and commitment to working in ways that whakatinana (embody) CLD principles and practices continues to guide those working in and on the business of Inspiring Communities.

In terms of an organisational model, IC aligns most strongly to the emerging TEAL organisational form. An ako approach of distributed leadership means that ideas, action, leadership and decision making can be generated from any part of the team system. While core management functions (overall financial management, budget/resource allocations, contract approvals, contractor appointments, governance board liaison, reporting and support, overall strategic direction setting, team coordination and support) are assigned to designated contractors, responsibilities for work programmes and key activities are devolved to self-managing individuals and/or small teams.

As noted in the IC constellation diagram on page 4, IC work teams are often fluid – with inputs from various contractors sought at key points to inform strategy and tactics. Those tasked as responsible are enabled to get on and do, linking back to the broader team for support and/or to share learning as appropriate.

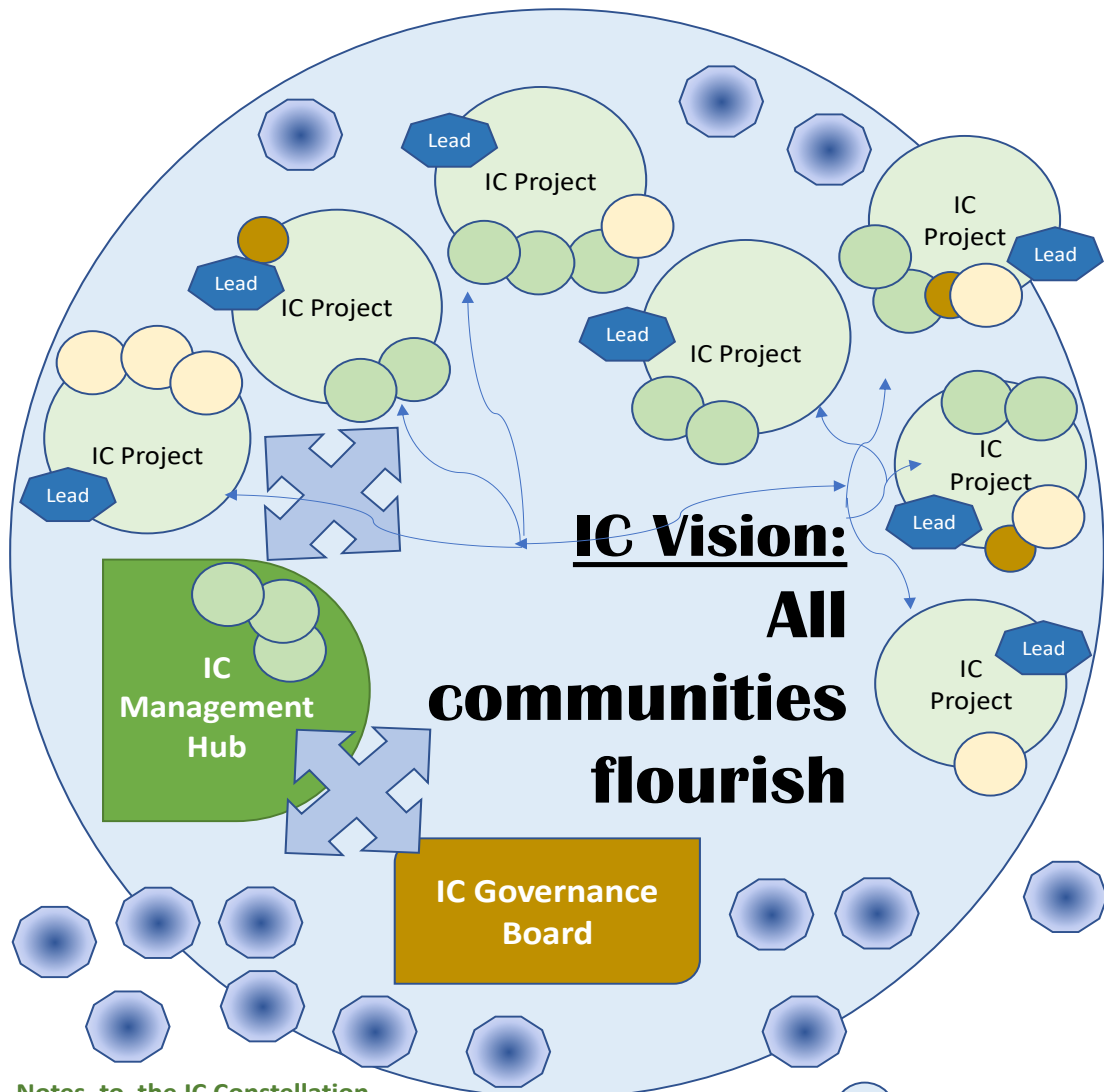
In acknowledging an ako approach (we are all teachers and learners), newer IC contractors are shadowed/supported by a longer-term IC contractor to ensure practice, approaches, resources and understandings are effectively shared. It is important all those working within the IC team feel competent, comfortable and confident, and that the fidelity of CLD/IC is also maintained. This process also enables us to step in for each other when needed.

Within the context of distributed leadership, an IC team member is identified as key liaison/management point for each contracted project. A member of the IC management hub will also be involved in the preparation and sign off of all consultancy proposals, with IC contractors generally acting as a 'go between' with clients to prepare content, negotiate details and relationships as required.

Balancing chaos and order in our work is both familiar and constant. We manage this tension by holding a number of key elements both tightly or loosely as noted below:

Tightly Held Elements	Loosely Held Elements
<i>IC aspirations, principles, values and commitment to honouring the Te Tiriti o Waitangi.</i>	<i>Workstreams and programmes – we adapt scope and scale as required.</i>
<i>Behaviours - collaborative, relational, generative, learning etc.</i>	<i>Level of autonomy - project leads make decisions as needed but come back when issues of quality, risk, resource, budget etc.</i>
<i>IC communication and branding</i>	
<i>CLD principles and underpinning frameworks e.g. Theory of Change, Eco Cycle, Complexity thinking, Quadrants of Change.</i>	
<i>Accountability – to funders as well as to ourselves.</i>	

## A Constellation Focused on Enabling Communities to Flourish – Kia ora ai te hapori



### Notes to the IC Constellation

- The IC vision overarches/holds both IC and the broader IC Network
- IC Activities (projects) are diverse, with different funding sources
- Some projects involve more than one IC contractor (green circle) & sometimes an external advisor from within the IC network will be invited to support IC projects (yellow circle)
- A lead IC person (blue hexagon) is clear for everything IC is involved with,
- Some IC projects involve external agencies/people as partners/clients (yellow circle)
- While some CLD activity (blue octagon) happens within the IC Network – much is also happens independently of IC

## Touchstones that Guide our Work Together as Inspiring Communities

*Ngā tikanga e arahi ana i tō tātou mahi tahi*

There are two key inter-related sets of principles that underpin the Inspiring Communities team's 'how to' and general approach. The first set of principles focuses on how we work with external organisations, communities and initiatives, as noted in the Inspiring Communities Strategic Statement for 2018/9 on page 7. The second set below guides our interactions with each other and the organisation:

- **Mahi tahi - Collaborative and collegial:** as is practical/doable within budgets, we value and encourage input from other IC team members in our work and share what we know, have and observe. If people are stretched, we're willing to help support and share the load.
- **Mahi pono - Open, Transparent and Accountable:** there's equity in the way that work is allocated, with individual contractor's strengths, capacity and interests also leveraged. Financial rewards for Inspiring Communities and contractors are made clear in contracts and contractor schedules, along with accountabilities for action. While being part of the IC Team, contractors maintain their own independent financial management system covering tax, invoicing for projects, health and safety, suitable working environment etc.
- **Mahi whakamana - Thinking the best of each other in all that we do:** working with integrity, trust and intentionally building and maintaining respectful, quality relationships. This means doing what we say we will do and communicating early if we can't.
- **Mahi tika - CLD kaupapa and IC foundational resources the basis for our work:** while all in the contracting team bring our unique style and experience to our work, IC contractors utilise a set of core resources that Inspiring Communities has developed so that there is consistency in CLD framing, language, tools and general approach across the IC contractor team.
- **Mahi tauutuutu - Curious, generative and reciprocal:** we proactively think about additional 'good work' that will contribute to Inspiring Communities vision and mission and seek interest/resources to advance this where practical.
- **Mahi whakatipu - Working in the commons while also building the profile of Inspiring Communities and CLD:** each IC contractor brings intellectual property and learning from our diverse experiences that will inform IC and other contract work. IC activities are based firmly in the commons, with clear intent to build, grow and share emerging CLD learning and evidence as it unfolds. We understand that strengthening the brand of Inspiring communities also helps build the national CLD movement more broadly.

- **Mahi herekore - Timely warning and ability to say 'no':** it's expected that IC contractors will be undertaking a range of consultancy activities for IC and others. IC will give as much advance warning of potential IC contract work as possible, with a clear understanding that a contractor or associate has the freedom to choose whether to be involved in each project or not.
- **Mahi Tiritiri - Commitment to be part of a shared learning community:** as CLD practitioners we value learning and wish to extend and deepen the CLD learning and evidence base here in Aotearoa. We will enable this by collectively sharing and harvesting emerging learning and thinking from different CLD activities we're involved with – both inside and outside of IC. As a learning organisation, Inspiring Communities will support this by:
  - Convening a quarterly phone/online call to share connections, ideas, learning in relation to CLD and the work of IC. Contractors join in this reflective conversation if/as they're able.

# Inspiring Communities Strategic Statement 2018-19



## Our Vision:

Matawhānui:

An Aotearoa where all communities flourish.

**Ka ora ai te hāpori ō Aotearoa.**

## Our Mission:

Whakatakanga:

Increasing the capacity of communities to thrive through community-led change.

**Kia whakamana i ngā hāpori, kia piki te raukaha ki te ora.**

## Strategic Outcomes:

1. New Zealand's community-led development (CLD) movement is supported and grown. *Ka tautoko, ka whakatipu te whakawhanake ā-hāpori o Aotearoa.*
2. CLD practice and capability is strengthened. *Ka whakamāia, ka whakakaha te whakawhanake ā-hāpori.*
3. CLD is embedded within and across sectors and world views. *Ka whakararau te whakawhanake ā-hāpori ki rō, ki tāpae i ngā rāngai me ngā mātauranga whānui.*
4. Inspiring Communities' organisational capacity and sustainability is enhanced. *Ka whakangako te raukaha me te whakauka o Inspiring Communities.*

## Our Roles:

1. **Ako: Learning**, capturing, creating and sharing CLD knowledge, wisdom and learning (Matauranga CLD).
2. **Tautoko: Providing support and training** to enhance CLD understanding, skills, practice and policy to enable effective locally-led change.
3. **Tūhono: Connecting** people and places with ideas, evidence and action that works.
4. **Whakaaweawe: Influencing** using local wisdom and practice-based evidence to inform public policy and conditions for locally-led change.

## Hei arahi i tō tātou mahi - our way of working:

- CLD principles underpin everything we do.  
*Ka arahina ngā tikanga whakawhanake ā-hapori i ō tātou mahi katoa.*
- We are committed to a Treaty honouring Aotearoa. As a small tāngata Tiriti organisation, our Treaty commitment is reflected conceptually, structurally and practically in what we do.  
*Ka whai tātou i te ara e whakahōnoretia te Tiriti. Kua whakaata tēnei takohanga ā-whakaaro, ā-whakatakotoranga, ā-tinana i ō tātou mahi katoa.*
- We build capacity, skills and knowledge to support both the national CLD movement and achievement of local aspirations.  
*Ka whakapikitia e mātou te raukaha, ngā pūkenga, me te mātauranga kia tautoko i te whakawhanake ā-hapori ki Aoteroa, ki te tutuki hoki i ngā whainga o te hapori.*
- We work 'with' others, not on our own. We model active listening, collaboration and building trusting, respectful relationships.  
*Ka mahi takitini, tē mahi takitahi. Ka whakatinanahia e mātou i ngā tikanga o te āta whakarongo, te mahi tahi, me te whai i ngā whanaungatanga mā runga i te whakawhirinaki me te whakaute.*
- We're responsive, adaptive, enterprising and committed to reflecting and learning from all we do.  
*Ka whai whakaaro, ka whai urutau, ka whai rawa tātou. Ka piri tātou ki te tikanga o te whakaaroaro, me te ako i ō tātou mahi katoa.*
- We're prepared to take risks and creatively model innovative responses to complex challenges and opportunities ahead.  
*Ka āhei tātou ki te whakawhara, ka auaha tō tātou tukanga ki ngā wero matatini me ngā huarahi whai hua.*
- We share what we know, using our connections, networks and knowledge for greater gain of the CLD movement and effective CLD practice.  
*Ka mahi tiritiri tātou. Ka whakamahia ō mātou tūhononga me tō matou mātauranga mō te hua o te rerenga whakawhanake ā-hapori kia whakatinanahia tika ai.*