



Briefing Note: An Education Perspective on Te Rautaki Matihiko mō Aotearoa | The Digital Strategy for Aotearoa

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	24 November 2022	Priority:	Low
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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of Te Rautaki Matihiko mō Aotearoa | He Digital Strategy for Aotearoa (DS4A) with particular focus on Education, and outline Education's role in the development of the strategy.

Summary

- Minister Clark provided you copies of the DS4A and action plan¹ developed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). This paper outlines the Ministry of Education's (the Ministry) involvement in development of the documents, expectations and actions for the Ministry, timelines for policy development and implementation, potential impacts for the education sector and associated risks identified by the Ministry.
- The Ministry engaged with MBIE representatives throughout the formulation of the DS4A and associated action plan. The Ministry provided written and/or verbal feedback via the Education Digital and Data Board, Education Digital and Data Reference Group, Digital Equity Oversight Group and other agency to agency communication channels.

¹ Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, respectively

Recommended Actions

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a) **Note** the overview of Te Rautaki Matihiko mō Aotearoa | He Digital Strategy for Aotearoa (DS4A), its focus on education, and the implications for the Ministry of Education in the strategy's development; and

Noted.

- b) **Agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.

Agree / Disagree.

Stuart Wakefield

Stuart Wakefield
Āpiha matihiko Rangatira | Chief Digital Officer
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25/1122

Jan Tinetti

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

25/11/ 2022

Background

1. Ministry officials met with Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) and MBIE throughout the development of the DS4A and we endorse the themes of Trust (Mahi Tika), Inclusion (Mahi Tahi) and Growth (Mahi Ake).
2. The DS4A aligns with the refresh of the Education Sector Digital Strategy – Connected Ako; Digital and Data for Learning. Education agencies are working on the revised strategy which focuses on supporting Te Tiriti, Equity and Thriving New Zealanders. Under these pou it proposes aspirations for education agencies to commit to in order to deliver best digital outcomes. The broad vision is that:
 - a. Learners and educators can thrive - learn, work and live in a digital world; and
 - b. Teaching and learning at any level make best use of data and digital approaches.

Summarised Feedback on DS4A (2021-2022)

General

3. Overall, the Ministry of Education suggests that stronger links could be made to the role of government through education to ensure people are equipped with the capabilities they need to use digital, and to understand cyber threats etc. In this sense, the education system may, for example, play a greater role in community 'out-reach' via schools. It may also develop functions to support lifelong learning for both employment opportunities and greater social cohesion through adoption of technologies within communities.
4. The Digital Executive Board is an interdepartmental executive board which will lead and drive the implementation of the Digital Strategy for Aotearoa and its associated Action Plan. The proposed membership comprises of DIA, MBIE, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), and Statistics New Zealand. This board aims to deliver priorities in the Digital Economy and Communications portfolios. However, socially focused agencies should be included in this board. The Ministry of Education would like to have representation to support the goals of the trust, inclusion and growth themes.

Inclusion (Mahi Tahi)

5. The Ministry's feedback focused on digital equity issues including the access and affordability of internet connectivity and devices. The equity theme in the DS4A is aspirational. However, it lacks specific objectives and funded initiatives to address the digital divide especially in the short to medium term.
6. Digital inclusion is an all-of-government issue, however no specific Minister or agency is responsible for achieving equity in this space. Minister Hipkins has noted² his support of the DS4A and desire for a 'step change in closing the digital divide'. Ministers Tinetti and Clark met on 17 November 2022 to discuss ongoing issues.

² In a letter to Minister Clark on 10 December 2021, CH10916 refers

7. 'Access' to internet connections comprises two components (availability and affordability) and both are necessary as stated in the Digital Strategy for Aotearoa Mahi Tahi | Digital Inclusion goals. But it is only the provision of suitable connectivity infrastructure (availability) that is the focus of the Statement of Intent in Lifting Connectivity in Aotearoa. Without the 'affordability' component being addressed we risk one-in-five New Zealanders remaining digitally excluded.
8. Household connectivity is an all-of-government issue, and we believe the most benefit from a whole-of-government perspective would be derived by first focusing on all low-income households with children. The Ministry would then continue to focus on how to make appropriate devices available for learners, which would have greater utility when such home connectivity is in place.

Growth (Mahi Ake)

9. The role of schools, kura and tertiary organisations in the development of a digitally skilled workforce is significant. This role will be further developed in the context of the recently commenced, literacy & communications and maths strategy and action plan, the refresh of the *New Zealand Curriculum*, the redesign of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, the NCEA Change programme and the reform of Vocational Education.

Growth (Mahi Tika)

10. The Ministry, via curriculum implementation and by extension via the relationships children and young people have with their communities, may well contribute growth of digital trust and online safety.

Alignment of the DS4A and Connected Ako; Digital and Data for Learning

11. The Digital Strategy for Aotearoa envisions a future where New Zealanders are connected and adept in digital technologies, realising the objectives of trust, inclusion and growth. To achieve that state, education has a pivotal role in equipping learners with the skills and attributes they will need to live and work in digital environments.
12. This challenge is the focus of Connected Ako; Digital and Data for Learning, the digital education strategy which is now in development and scheduled for release early in 2023.
13. The education strategy acknowledges the vital importance of access to devices and connectivity both in schools and at homes, but notes that achieving ubiquitous connectivity, access and affordability is beyond the scope of education and requires all-of-government approach.
14. A key part of Connected Ako is raising learners' capability and skills so they are able to participate fully in digital worlds – navigating the risks, seizing the opportunities and contributing to the digital economy. Education is a critical contributor and enabler of the Digital Strategy for Aotearoa therefore should be included in governance.

15. The Ministry will provide a separate and more detailed update to Education Ministers regarding the Connected Ako; Digital and Data for Learning in December 2022.

Key Risks and Benefits

16. The governance structure and goals of the DS4A have been agreed upon by Cabinet [CAB-22MIN-0302 refers]. As it currently stands, the DS4A does not include representatives from the Ministry of Education or other social sector agencies, such as the Ministry of Social Development.
17. As the board consists of agencies that traditionally support digital economy and communication priorities, there is a risk that the exclusion of social sector agencies could diminish the aspirations of the inclusion theme.

Annexes

Annex 1: Te Rautaki Matihiko mō Aotearoa | He Digital Strategy for Aotearoa (DS4A)

Annex 2: Decision and Feedback Timeline

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Date	Action
16 October 2021	MOE Chief Digital Officer formally responds to the final version of the DS4A and associated Cabinet paper
28 October 2021	Robyn Henderson (MBIE) presents the DS4A to the EDDB for discussion
16 November 2021	EDDB submits formal feedback on the DS4A to MBIE representatives
14 April 2022	MOE provides an initial response on the Digital Skills and Talent Plan to MBIE and Minister Tinetti's Office
01 June 2022	Digital Government Leadership group meets to discuss the DS4A. This includes representatives from MOE, DIA, MSD & MOJ.
01 July 2022	Robyn Henderson (MBIE) presents an update on the DS4A to the Ministry's Digital Equity Oversight Group