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**Evaluative thinking and organisational adaptation: The New Zealand Ministry of Education's evaluation strategy**

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In New Zealand, and across the world, the focus of accountability in public sector management has made a shift from outputs to outcomes. New Zealand's new public sector accountability framework – Managing for Outcomes – requires New Zealand public sector agencies to demonstrate not only what outcomes they are achieving, but how they are actively managing resources and decisions to produce those outcomes. With this goes the requirement for public sector agencies to develop evaluation strategies.

This paper outlines how the Ministry of Education has tackled this requirement in an innovative way. While the Ministry has a high investment in producing information, including evaluation, evaluation effort has tended to be ad hoc and there has been varied utilisation and conversion to knowledge-in-practice. So, the Ministry's strategic priority in developing and implementing its Evaluation Strategy has been to advance the practice and use of evaluation, to build evaluation into organisational culture and 'business-as-usual' practice, all underpinned by an explicit organisational learning intent.

Key challenges have arisen around shifting the organisation's view of what evaluation is for, can do, and how it can be used. This has involved thinking about evaluation within the organisation as a system which operates alongside, and in tension with, a policy system, and political system. This paper explores how the implementation of the Evaluation Strategy has navigated these tensions and raises questions about how public sector organisations meld these systems in a productive way.