Social licence: final report on the nexus between producers and the public

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Social licence: final report on the nexus between producers and the public

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Summary

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This report summarises the work that has been completed at the conclusion of the Social licence – nexus of producers and consumers project, funded by the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge (OLW).

In early 2022, OLW announced a contestable funding round, inviting proposals for research that addressed key questions about understanding the social licence to farm. OLW posed several questions, which are outlined below.

- Can the evolution of farming methods over the past 50 years and changing urban consumer views be used to create increased social licence for future farming?
- Can initiatives to physically connect consumers with producers, such as 'open farms', change the hearts and minds of urban consumers? And if so, what is the best mechanism for this?
- Can a more prescribed development of the peri-urban zone foster mutual awareness and understanding, and what would this look like?

These questions formed the basis of the project objectives listed below.

Objectives

Emerging from the questions posed by OLW, the project looked to achieve the following aims/objectives.

- Objective 1: Understanding which criteria producers, agribusiness, consumers and citizens use to judge 'good' or 'acceptable' farming and business practices and the influences and drivers behind those criteria.
- Objective 2: Developing pathways, places, programmes, spaces and tools to enable producers, agribusiness and consumers to both evaluate and demonstrate how they meet these criteria, thus building meaningful, trusting relationships, where social licence can be negotiated and renegotiated.
- Objective 3: Identifying opportunities whereby industry bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local government (through statutory and non-statutory planning processes for peri-urban areas) can foster less adversarial – more 'productive' –relationships between producers and consumers.
- Objective 4: Extending findings about spaces and places for social licence to operate (SLO) negotiation beyond 'peri-urban' settings to establish implications for both rural and urban land and water management mechanisms and media.

Methods

The project used a variety of methods, including:
- co-design with partners and stakeholders

- surveys for producers and the New Zealand public
- literature and documentary reviews and analyses
- semi-structured interviews.

Key messages around SLO and from the project

- The need for SLO arises when there is a gap between the general public and a company, industry or organisation perceive their actions. The gap between the general public and farming is not as big as people think. Farming has reasonable levels of public support, but things can change over time, and quickly become a problem.
- SLO requires constant negotiation across multiple actors, places, time, and issues.
- SLO is about relationships, so there needs to be a relational approach taken to emphasise relationship building.
- Māori are partners (not stakeholders), so negotiations over farming's SLO need to be Te Tiriti led.
- From the project, the following key messages are:
  - The criteria used by the public and producers to assess 'good' farming are constantly changing. At present, they are reasonably well aligned.
  - Social licence is negotiated in a range of places – from roadsides to supermarkets – but some settings are better able to provide opportunities for meaningful exchanges between publics and producers to negotiate and renegotiate social licence.
  - Regulation of farming practices can influence the negotiation of a social licence, but it may also establish minimum compliance targets that are below what the public were expecting and what producers were willing to do on a voluntary basis. Non-statutory methods – from awards to support for catchment groups – may also be effective.

Recommendations

- Industry bodies should continue to raise the profile of farming and support producers who are willing to engage in activities that allow meaningful exchange between producers and publics. Some examples may include open days, opportunities to meet at food related events, e.g. University of Canterbury's Community Feast, and kapa haka events.
- While it is understood that SLO is not a legal requirement, local government activities play a key role in the broader web of legal, regulatory, political and actual licences (Gunningham et al. 2004). Increased recognition by local government of their role in the licencing web presents opportunities to align statutory and non-statutory mechanisms for greater effect.
- The media can play a key role in SLO negotiations; their remit may be limited to raising awareness rather than negotiating and mediating. However, the sensationalism in their reporting often emphasises discord and friction. Industry bodies can play a key role by providing good new stories, and supporting campaigns like Meat the

Need (https://meattheneed.org/) and Open Farms (https://www.openfarms.co.nz/) can be used to provide a more balanced account.

1   Introduction

In early 2022, the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge (OLW) announced a contestable funding round, inviting proposals for research that (in this case) addressed key questions about understanding social licence (SLO) and farming.

This report summarises the work that has been completed at the conclusion of the Social licence – nexus of producers and consumers[1] project, funded by OLW. We also include some recommendations and next steps for research in this area.

2   Background

This project focused on the following questions posed by OLW.

- Can the evolution of farming methods over the past 50 years and changing urban consumer views be used to create increased social licence for future farming?
- Can initiatives such as Open Farms, physically connect consumers with producers, and change the hearts and minds of urban consumers? And if so, what is the best mechanism for this?
- Can a more prescribed development of the peri-urban zone foster mutual awareness and understanding, and what would this look like?

3   Objectives

Emerging from the questions posed by OLW, the project looked to achieve the following aims/objectives.

- Objective 1: Understanding which criteria producers, agribusiness, consumers and citizens use to judge 'good' or 'acceptable' farming and business practices and the influences and drivers behind those criteria.
- Objective 2: Developing pathways, places, programmes, spaces and tools to enable producers, agribusiness and consumers to both evaluate and demonstrate how they meet these criteria, thus building meaningful, trusting relationships, where SLO can be negotiated and renegotiated.
- Objective 3: Identifying opportunities whereby industry bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local government (through statutory and non-statutory planning processes for peri-urban areas) can foster less adversarial – more 'productive' – relationships between producers and consumers.

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[1] While OLW used the term 'consumers', the project team felt that the public was a better, more encompassing term. Consumers use more price-based criteria to judge whether something is good or not.

- Objective 4: Extending findings about spaces and places for SLO negotiation beyond 'peri-urban' settings to establish implications for both rural and urban land and water management mechanisms and media.

4   Methods

A variety of methods were deployed throughout the project. The project was initiated with several virtual and in-person hui with project partners and stakeholders. At these hui, we refined the problems and our objectives and settled on an initial course of action for undertaking this research. As the project progressed, we held a number of smaller hui with involved partners and stakeholders to refine some of the components of the larger project.

The inventory of spaces and places started as a review and analysis of available literature and documents around where citizens 'meet' agricultural producers in Aotearoa New Zealand (AoNZ). In addition to the analysis of the literature, direct observation by the research team was undertaken as they travelled throughout rural Canterbury.

Our work on producer and public expectations of the 'good farmer' and 'good farming' was initiated by a literature survey. Concepts sourced from the literature were then tested with cohort producers through a series of semi-structured interviews that were arranged by the community-led group Thriving Southland (https://www.thrivingsouthland.co.nz). We developed two paired surveys that were informed by both these interviews and the literature: one for the general public and one for producers. Each survey consisted of approximately 30 questions on good farming practices, information sources, contact between producers and the public, and ideas of what SLO means. The public survey was distributed through Cint, one of the world's largest consumer networks for digital survey-based research. The producer survey was distributed through researcher networks, Quorum Sense (a community of producers, growers and researchers: see https://www.quorumsense.org.nz/) and Thriving Southland.

The waka taurua framework (Maxwell et al. 2020) was extended to SLO in the agribusiness context by Stronge et al. (2023) through a literature review and analysis, and refined through ongoing discussions with Māori researchers and agribusiness 'practitioners'.

Understanding the relationships between Ahi kā (i.e. those who keep the homefires burning) and SLO used action research, where the researchers spent substantial time with Māori land owners and their hapū, participating in kapa haka and other events.

All research involving humans was submitted to and approved through the Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research human ethics process (Social Ethics Applications 2223/07, 2223/08, and 2324/19).

5   Key findings

The research programme comprised several sub-projects that contributed to the whole of project objectives and key findings on SLO.

5.1 Expectations of 'good farming'

Over the past 50 years, farming practices and public perceptions of farming in AoNZ have changed substantially. These changes raise deeper questions over the future relationship between producers and the public. Our research challenged the assumption that perceptions of farming differ significantly between producers and the public. Two surveys were enumerated where we tested the concept of SLO using the 'good farmer' as a foundation. One survey was with producers and the other was with the public. We found perceptions of 'good farming' practices held by the public and producers were relatively aligned – but we were unable to determine if each group interprets these characteristics of 'good farming' in the same way, despite core messages aligning. Producers were trusted as a source of information on farming more than mainstream media (e.g. TV, radio) by both groups. Increasing alignment of 'good farmer' perceptions between the groups may lead to an increased perceived trustworthiness of producers by the public as an information source.

Our findings contribute to the growing sense that the perceived 'rural/urban divide' is not as large. The findings extend the literature by highlighting the strong alignment of perceptions and nuanced interpretations of good farming practices by both public and producers (Booth et al. 2023, in review).

The results of the public and producer surveys have been disseminated through a variety of outputs. The research team has prepared and submitted one academic journal article, and a second article is in preparation. Two fact sheets have been developed, and a podcast recorded and hosted by Quorum Sense. The presentation given at the 2023 State of Australasian Cities (SOAC) conference focused on the results of the surveys.

5.2 Inventory of places and spaces

Vallance and Edwards (2023) undertook an extensive literature review to lay the foundation for an inventory of places and spaces where SLO may be negotiated between producers and publics. As Vallance and Edwards (2023) note, the literature reviewe provided some useful lessons and frameworks for the project. The paper also notes a number of debates relating to:

- what is being negotiated
- where these negotiations take place (spaces and places)
- how social licence is negotiated (types of engagement).

What is being negotiated is diverse.

Many of the issues at the centre of these negotiations of social licence between producers and the public are well known and include, for example, animal welfare and environmental degradation. Some issues are in the process of transitioning from informal negotiations of social licence to farm to more formal legislation, such as the passing of the National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land as urban areas encroach on versatile and high-class soils. However, there are also some issues included in the inventory that may represent the starting point for future negotiations on food security and food sovereignty, the democratisation of food and fibre, localisation, and kai ora (being healthy / having life). These starting points and initiating voluntary codes of conduct or standards through certification and/or verification may be a way of proactively managing social licence along the journey from small issue to the subject of regulation.

Where (places and spaces).

This part of the inventory documented how the spaces and places where social licence is negotiated are diverse, ranging from 'on farm' (agritourism, pick-your-own, etc.), through to various kinds of markets, on roadsides, and to specific areas where the adverse effects of farming (e.g. declining water quality) are being experienced. We included various media as a type of space here too.

How (programmes and protests)

This section of the inventory highlighted there are numerous *ways* of negotiating social licence. Some ways are productive, in the sense of both gaining approval by supplying much-needed or highly valued food and fibre and accentuating the positive aspects of farming. Negotiations can also be prolonged, complex, event-driven, emotive, productive or adversarial. They can also invoke different versions of 'the social', from small groups protesting over localised issues (such as pollution of a specific waterway) to broader movements concerned about freshwater quality throughout the country (Vallance & Edwards 2023).

This work has been disseminated through one academic journal article (submitted), one contract report and a presentation at the State of Australasian Cities (SOAC) conference.

5.3   Student work

One of the key components of this project was to include planning students to undertake research on SLO in peri-urban areas. The project funded five students: one summer student, three students completing undergraduate directed studies papers, and one Masters student. All of the students submitted abstracts to present their work at the 2023 State of Australasian Cities Conference in Wellington, December 2023. The project researchers worked with the conference organisers to include a special session on SLO and the peri-urban zone in the conference programme. Two of the students were unable to attend the conference, however, short summaries of all of the students' work appear below.

5.3.1   Lincoln University student work

Where town meets country: negotiating social licence at agriculture and pastoral shows in Canterbury, New Zealand

Donna Patterson – Lincoln University summer student

Agricultural and Pastoral (A&P) shows have a long history as the meeting point for town and country. They are public events that are often held in New Zealand's towns and cities, showcasing animals, food, equipment, skills, and recreation associated with agricultural activities, and providing sideshow entertainment and family fun. They can also be interpreted as places where social licence to farm is negotiated by creating linkages across rural and urban communities. Initially established through England's Royal Society of Agriculture, New Zealand's earliest A&P shows were held in the 1840s; by the 1950s, over 100 A&P shows were occurring annually around AoNZ. The Canterbury A&P show is now New Zealand's oldest A&P association and traditionally the largest show, attracting regular attendance of over 100,000 people over three days, with the final 'Show Day' enshrined as a public holiday for the Canterbury region. While the institutional structure of these shows reflects their settler-colonial roots, the physical site of many A&P shows has shifted over time, and the array of activities on offer has also changed. In this research, the development of five A&P shows across the Canterbury region: Amberley, Ashburton, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury and South Canterbury were tracked. The research considered who and what is included in (and excluded from) A&P shows in AoNZ, and the changes shows have undergone to ensure their ongoing survival. In doing so, how A&P shows are responding to community concerns over sustainable farming, animal welfare, and cultural diversity in their own efforts to negotiate a social licence to operate is discussed (Patterson et al. 2023).

The work on A&P shows as a place for negotiating social licence has resulted in two co-authored manuscripts submitted for review and possible publication in the *Lincoln Planning Review* and *New Zealand Geographer*.

5.3.2   Massey University student work

Has the social license negotiated within peri-urban environments been impacted following Cyclone Gabrielle?

Hannah Gully – Report submitted to Massey University Planning Project.

This report examined a case study of disaster response in Te Awa, a suburb south of Napier in Hawke's Bay. During Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023, the suburb flooded resulting in the evacuation of 8000 citizens. The report aimed to explore the implications of the cyclone and disaster response for the social licence for farming in the region. Although Te Awa is a peri-urban suburb, the catchment where Te Awa is located supports a lot of horticultural farming. Hannah's research question was:

> Has the social licence negotiated within peri-urban environments been impacted following Cyclone Gabrielle?

Hannah's report (Gully 2023) was written from the perspective of a practicing planner who lives and works in Hawke's Bay. She noted the important role of planners in facilitating relationships and navigating complexities between industries, community, and local government. Hannah analysed data using qualitative discourse analysis techniques. Hannah chose not to conduct interviews as the research was completed in the aftermath of the cyclone, and it was decided that it would be too challenging for stakeholders to be interviewed at that time. Various forms of qualitative data like media and public submissions were analysed in the report.

In noting the media's response to the disaster, Hannah noted the issue of climate change and responsiveness to future events was a major theme. Increased risk of flooding means some land uses previously suitable for Te Awa may no longer be suitable in the future. .

In concluding, Hannah noted that social licence operates at different scales and that moments of crises – like Cyclone Gabrielle – can trigger different conversations at different scales. Furthermore, she noted the importance of media in shaping narratives around disaster recovery, as well as the importance of public engagement and the need for reactive governance.

Slash and social licence: an examination of the role of institutional assemblages in (re)negotiating a social licence to forest in Aotearoa New Zealand

Nina Muijsson – Submitted to Massey University for the BA Resource and Environmental Planning with Honours course.

Nina's report examines the role of 'institutional planning assemblages' in (re)negotiating social licence to forest. The case study chosen was the Gisborne/Wairoa region post Cyclone Gabrielle. Nina's research question was:

> What is the role of institutional (planning) assemblages in (re)negotiating a social licence to forest in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Nina argued the definition of social licence remains contested but is broadly understood as 'a signifier of acceptance or approval from communities and/or stakeholders of (industry) activities'. In addition to social licence, Nina also noted other kinds of licences or permits that affect activities, such as legal, regulatory, political, and actuarial licences. This highlighted how social licence to operate could be viewed as part of a 'web of licences' where 'institutions' capture both the informal and formal rules and norms that influence social licence to operate.

Nina combined various qualitative research methods including case study analysis, controversy analysis, spatial analysis, document analysis, and media analysis. Given the post-disaster recovery context, Nina did not collect primary data through interviews and surveys as this may have placed undue burdens on those recovering from the cyclone. The data used for the analysis was publicly available from various media, cartographic sources, and regional council and central government policies and standards.

The results set out three ways in which institutional planning assemblages help (re)negotiate social licence to forest in a post-cyclone environment: 1) scaling effects, 2)

cascading effects, and 3) the (de)stabilisation of the negotiation process. By 'scaling effects', Nina was referring to how forestry practices are constrained and moulded by demands made by national standards and international markets and consumers. 'Cascading effects' refers to planning assemblages that promote different responses at different scales, with an emphasis on national-scale responses over local responses. For example, advocates elevated the issue of forestry slash – which is experienced locally – as a national-scale issue, linking nationally developed policy to the environmental destruction experienced in Gisborne and Wairoa. When referring to (de)stabilisation of the negotiation process, Nina claimed that planning assemblages have destabilised the negotiation of forestry's SLO by historically remaining silent around these concerns. The author cited consistent calls, expressed through public submissions to plans and policies, to strengthen the voice of local communities and involvement in the development and implementation of solutions to forestry like slash and debris. Despite this, legal institutional assemblages primarily focused on ministries, councils, and industries as key actors – and not on the local community.

In summarising, Nina argued that social licence for forestry in New Zealand requires multiple licences at different scales to be (re)negotiated. Social licence to operate is intricately connected with the wider 'licensing web' which also includes the earlier mentioned legal, regulatory, political, actuarial licences. Nina also argued that withdrawal of social licence can be a generative event for (re)negotiating that social licence, creating a moment where actors might begin paying closer attention to the institutional assemblages that currently make up the social licence negotiation process.

5.3.3   University of Waikato student work

How farmers' social licence to operate is being negotiated in statutory planning processes in the Waikato Region.

Quinn Langdon – Submitted to Waikato University as part of course ENVPL490-23A.

Quinn's course work was guided by the following four assumptions: 1) regulatory requirements provide a baseline for assessing the social licence to farm; 2) social licence to farm is lost when producers do not meet their minimum regulatory requirements; 3) meeting the minimum regulatory requirements does not indicate farming operations have a social licence; 4) exceeding minimum regulatory requirements can indicate a farming operation holds a social licence to farm.

His work (reported in Langdon 2023) tested these assumptions through a case study of Waikato dairy farmers compliance with dairy effluent discharge consents as a key element of a dairy operation. While other factors like methane emissions may also affect dairy farming's social licence, Quinn proposed that the regulatory requirements of dairy effluent discharges may be a proxy indicator of the presence or absence of SLO.

In his literature review, Quinn noted there is no one definitive definition of SLO, and instead argued that the definition remains contested. He noted similarities with other terms including corporate social responsibility, organisational legitimacy, and stakeholder management. Quinn also noted that multiple social licences often need to be obtained

from different communities, pinpointing that the development of trust is a critical component of social licence.

To test his four assumptions, Quinn compared data collected from the Waikato Regional Council which noted compliance with dairy effluent discharge consents over the last five years. There are over 4,000 operational dairy farms within the jurisdiction of the Waikato Regional Council. Quinn noted that water quality is a major public concern regarding dairy farming, and so the choice to focus on dairy effluent discharges was a recognition that these discharges have some impact on that freshwater quality.

The WRC data splits producer compliance with dairy effluent discharge rules into five categories: full compliance, high-level compliance, provisional compliance, partial compliance, and significant non-compliance. To simplify the analysis, the first three categories were further grouped into a 'compliant' category and the last two into a 'non-compliant' category. Using these two categories, Quinn showed that effluent discharge compliance rates remained stable across 2016/17 and 2017/18 but fell during 2018/19 and 2019/20. However, by 2020/21 compliance rates had rebounded and were at their highest recorded rate of 71%, while non-compliance was at its lowest recorded rate of 29%.

Quinn's discussion was framed around three insights. The first insight was that producers face difficulties in meeting their minimum regulatory requirement, and that, in Quinn's opinion, the producers who do not comply will struggle to gain SLO. Quinn's second insight was that it is easier to identify when activities lack SLO, than when they have SLO. Quinn's third insight was that, using his methodology and proxy data, statutory processes like compliance rates do not enable easy identification of SLO. The report concluded with recommendations for regional councils, such as engaging in workshops which would bring producers, the public, and the council together; identifying farming operations that positively exceed minimum regulatory requirements; and compiling information on farms that exceed these minimum requirements.

5.3.4   University of Otago student work

Investigating the relationship between the loss of social licence to farm in peri-urban areas and the development of regulation

Jared Brenssell – Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Master of Planning Degree, Otago University.

The term 'social licence' is often used to describe a type of 'informal permit' which communities may issue for a certain activity to take place. There is a multitude of literature which emphasises the need for a SLO within primary industries. In AoNZ, issues associated with freshwater pollution have been a focal point for challenges to the social license for agriculture. In August 2020, the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (NES-FW) were released with subpart 3 being related specifically to Intensive Winter Grazing (IWG) activities. This signposted the start of IWG regulation in AoNZ, an activity which had not previously been regulated, with farming operations now requiring a resource consent. Before the implementation of these guidelines, the public view of IWG had been heavily critical, as expressed in a multitude of

media articles. This indicated that the SLO to undertake IWG activities may have been compromised. Given the IWG regulations have only recently come into force, the true ramifications of these regulations are largely unknown. However, for now, the majority of agricultural operators have been able to continue IWG in the manner that they always have. This raises the question: How has the SLO changed due to the presence of regulation, when the activity itself has not dramatically changed? Drawing on a media analysis, interviews and survey responses, this research explored the relationship between the social licence to farm in peri-urban areas and statutory/regulatory change in AoNZ. The IWG regulations under the NES-FW may have been aimed at addressing concerns that are critical for maintaining a SLO. However, findings from previous research suggested that SLO cannot be obtained through regulation alone, and therefore the relationships between regulation and SLO should be more carefully considered (Brenssell 2023).

5.4 Waka taurua SLO framework

While not specifically a blueprint for developing SLO, the broad waka taurua framework developed by Maxwell et al. (2020), has been adapted to facilitate gaining and maintaining SLO in the AoNZ Māori agribusiness sector by Stronge et al. (2023). It serves as a guide to the type of information and processes that need to be considered in building and maintaining SLO in a bicultural context. The framework provides a holistic conceptualisation of the components, processes, and connections required in developing SLO and distils this conceptualisation down to the essence of the problem: (and shown in Figure 1)

- The terms of a social licence are located in the values, expectations and perceptions of communities of interest (conceptualised as individual waka).
- SLO emerges as an issue when there are gaps between people's values, perceptions, expectations and that of industries values, procedures, and processes (conceptualised as how well the purpose of your waka aligns with the purpose of the other).
- SLO requires these gaps in values, perceptions and expectations to be bridged in a collaborative way (conceptualised as a space for consented, purposeful engagement between the two waka to achieve a common purpose).

As highlighted throughout the discussions in this report, context is a key aspect in determining SLO (Prno 2013; Dare et al. 2014; Hall & Jeanneret 2015). SLO should be understood as a continuum of multiple licences negotiated with various communities of interest (Dare et al. 2014) which must be continually re-evaluated and renegotiated across time, across multiple actors, across multiple spaces, and across multiple issues (Vallance & Edwards 2023). Extending the waka taurua as a metaphor, SLO can be thought of as a fleet of single-hulled canoes constantly interacting with one another (engaging, disengaging, re-engaging) across activities, place, time, etc (cf. Vallance & Edwards 2023). The importance of this engagement is highlighted in the waka Māori hull Even within one sector, different actors can have a wide range of positions/perspectives. Recognising that heterogeneity of positions/perspectives exists is crucial to developing SLO. Every situation is different, so those seeking SLO from others need to reflect on their purpose, what they are trying to achieve, and what the value drivers are for that specific context; and to adapt their approach accordingly (Stronge et al. 2023).

To develop the waka taurua framework, Stronge et al. (2023) have drawn on Māori scholarship and SLO literature to examine how the waka taurua framework can be used to help conceptualise SLO across knowledge systems. They recommend collecting empirical data across the 'fleet of single-hulled canoes' (i.e. the various waka Māori/waka Tauiwi combinations) as the next step to build on this theory.

Figure 1. A proposed waka taurua framework for SLO in an agricultural context. (Source: Stronge et al. 2023, modified from Stronge et al. 2020).

A short report outlining the waka taurua framework is the output from this stream of work (Stronge et al. 2023).

5.5 Ahi kā and 'social licensing'

Māori producers negotiating social licence to farm whenua Māori face specific challenges, such as those associated with fractured land ownership. Ahi kā – those who 'keep the home fires burning' – are key actors navigating these challenges by rebuilding and nurturing relationships between whanau, whenua and awa.

- The work of ahi kā to strengthen these relationships (whanaungatanga) is foundational to farming in a healthy way that supports mana motuhake, te oranga o te taiao, and te mana o te wai.
- Whanaungatanga are recreated and strengthened in various ways, not all of which are directly related to farming on the face of it, including through flax weaving, kapa haka, marae restoration, the building of papakāinga and the establishment of governance structures that can support collective decision making and practice frameworks.
- The importance of the work ahi kā undertake could be better recognised when working with mana whenua in a range of contexts.
- Whakapapa and commitment to place mean processes like negotiating social licence are always ongoing; 'social licensing' signals this active dynamic.

The key output is a video highlighting the value of kapa haka as a means of restoring and strengthening relationships between whanau, whenua, and awa is nearing completion.

This will be available for broad dissemination to non-academic audiences. A journal article has also been drafted.

6   Impact

This project is on track to have significant impact on the relationships between producers and the public. We have produced a significant number of non-academic outputs that are likely to resonate with producers and the general public. Dissemination of the outputs goes beyond the Our Land and Water website, with content accessible through the Quorum Sense and Thriving Southland websites, and a new social licence 'sub-brand', *Farming for Good* to be launched by OLW early in 2024.

Our work on the expectations of producers and the public around 'good farming' has clearly demonstrated that producers and the public have very similar expectations of good farming, and that the alleged urban–rural divide does not appear to exist outside the media. These findings have been disseminated through several fact sheets and a podcast. Further, we will be showcasing the work in this project through a video panel discussion, involving producers and the public, on Stuff's soon-to-be launched (early 2024) rural masthead.

7   Research highlights and reflections

We have achieved each of the objectives we set out at the beginning of the project. Through our paired public and producer surveys on 'good farming', we now have a clearer understanding of both public and producer expectations around good farming. Our findings can help shape a more positive foundation on which producers and the public can build relationships and work to gain and/or maintain a social licence.

We have started to build a comprehensive inventory of spaces, places, and programmes where SLO can be negotiated. This inventory also provides some indication of what elements of SLO can be negotiated, and how these spaces, places and programmes can assist in the negotiation of SLO (Vallance & Edwards 2023). We have expanded an existing 'tool' – the Manaaki Whenua SLO framework (Stronge et al. 2020), with a te ao Māori framework and drivers – the waka taurua SLO framework (Stronge et al. 2023).

The project has provided evidence that although SLO is not a legal requirement, regulatory authorities and their activities are a key part of the licensing web that, in addition to social licence, includes legal, regulatory, political and acturial licences (Gunningham et al. 2004; Muijsson 2023). This is even more apparent if non-statutory activities – such as awards that 'normalise' certain practices, information provision, and funding for desirable activities like fencing waterways etc. – are more effective at pushing controversial issues in certain directions than regulation. Indeed, as Brenssell (2023) suggested in his thesis, regulations can create minimum standards that are below the targets for which producers may have been aiming for voluntarily. Further, in the context of IWG, Brenssell's work suggests the only real effect regulation has is to signal to the public that the issue has been solved when in reality and in terms of bio-physical environmental impact, very little has changed. However, there is some anecdotal evidence of conflicting ideas around IWG changes. Non-statutory programmes may be particularly useful in peri-urban areas where controversy may arise as farming and non-farming practices and preferences collide.

Through a combination of the inventory of spaces and places, paired surveys, and student work, we have been able to pull together broader implications for planning and land management. There are several implications for local governments and planning.

- Understanding social licence is part of a 'web' of formal and informal licensing requirements, and that each individual requirement can have impacts on other requirements.
- Understanding social licence involves constant negotiation, and is always being negotiated and re-negotiated as values and environments change.
- Recognising that while there is a desire to be able to measure and or evaluate social licence, it is difficult to develop broad indicators and metrics to measure and evaluate it because of its informal, diffuse, and context-dependent nature.
- Defining the participants and scale of social licence negotiations is extremely difficult.
- Trust is critical to gaining and maintaining a social licence.
- With different degrees of social acceptability, there are potentially different levels of social licence. Thomson and Boutilier (2011) have identified several boundaries of levels of social licence through their pyramid model of social licence.

Our Land and Water funded several other projects (e.g. Diverse experiences of farming; Enhancing assurance schemes; Urban-rural partnerships for equal change) that have relevance for SLO. All of these diverse OLW SLO-related projects produced similar key findings, and have all been brought under the 'Farming for Good' sub-brand umbrella. Dirt Road Communications has done an excellent job of hosting several hui with all the afore mentioned projects to coordinate findings and messaging around those findings.

A key element of this project was the funding of student work through a series of scholarships. Rather than simply provide the funding to the students in isolation, we tried to develop a community-of-practice amongst the students to foster collegiality and

extend their professional networks as they enter the workforce. Gathering in-person at the State of Australian Cities Conference (Wellington, December 2023) not only gave them experience presenting at a conference, but Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research staff were also able to introduce them to others with similar interests and provide a supportive environment.

While the project has officially ended, there are still a number of outputs and impact events that will occur between the end of the project and the end of the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge. There are at least two further academic journal articles in preparation, an upcoming presentation at an international conference, two presentations at the Our Land and Water final symposium in May 2024, and two videos – one highlighting kapa haka, and the other a panel discussion between members of the public and producers on good farming. The legacy of this project will be a 'sub-brand' of the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge called 'Farming for Good', which will have its own web presence.

8   Conclusions and future steps

Producers and the public have a range of options when it comes to negotiating social licence to farm. Developing a good match between the complexity of the issue (what), the places and spaces where the negotiation takes place (where), and how negotiations are undertaken (how), may be key to more 'productive' and less adversarial outcomes.

Our work on good farming concludes that mainstream messaging – and perceptions that the public and the farming community have divergent opinions on what constitutes a 'good producer' – risks oversimplifying a diverse and complex spectrum of nuanced perceptions. Findings from this project support a growing body of literature that shows that the perceived 'rural–urban divide' is not as large as believed by some (e.g. Deavoll 2017; Shepherd 2017; Woodward 2017; Uys 2023). We also extend the literature by finding there exists both strong alignment of perceptions and nuanced interpretations of good farming practices by the public and producers alike.

Perceptions, expectations and opinions can and do change over time (e.g. UMR Market Research 2008, 2017; Booth et al. 2022), with implications for the agricultural sector's SLO. Continuing to understand this dynamic relationship through varying lenses is important. While we focused on the 'good farmer'/'good farming' aspect of SLO, our study identified other potential areas for exploration within the concept of SLO. These areas included perceived differences between 'good farmer' and 'good farming', different interpretations of specific farming practices, and determinants of perceived trustworthiness of sources of information. Given the sociocultural and economic importance of the agricultural sector in AoNZ, investigating these areas further could contribute to the constructive societal conversation about the agricultural secto's licence to farm.

SLO needs to be considered within the political context that it may operate. At the start of this project, (July 2022), the terms 'social licence' and 'SLO' had been used by government, civil society and community groups as a necessity for producers to continue farming. With the recent change in government, SLO may lose some of its imperative, however,

producers should consider SLO to maintain their position in domestic and international markets.

The work of this project not only responded to the objectives that we set at the beginning of the project, but raised further questions around SLO. Some of the project partners are actively considering future projects that will approach other funding source (e.g. MBIE) to carry on this important work.

9   Acknowledgements

10   References

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