

Briefing

Meeting with Te Hiringa Mahara Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

Date due to MO: 30/05/2023 **Action required by:** 8/06/2023

Security level: UNCLASSIFIED **Briefing number:** BN2023-022

To: Hon Barbara Edmonds – Associate Minister of Health (Pacific)

Copy to: Minister Verrall – Minister of Health
[REDACTED]

Contact for Telephone Discussion

Name	Position	[REDACTED]
Karen Orsborn	Chief Executive	[REDACTED]
Matthew Bloomer	Acting Director, Wellbeing System Leadership	[REDACTED]

Minister's Office to Complete

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|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Decline | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change | <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's note | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | |

Comment:

Meeting with Te Hiringa Mahara Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

Security level: UNCLASSIFIED **Date:** 30/05/2023

To: Hon Barbara Edmonds – Associate Minister of Health (Pacific)

Purpose

1. This briefing supports your meeting with Te Hiringa Mahara - the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission on 8 June 2023 between 4:15pm – 4:45pm. The officials attending will be Hayden Wano, Board Chair, and Karen Orsborn, Chief Executive.

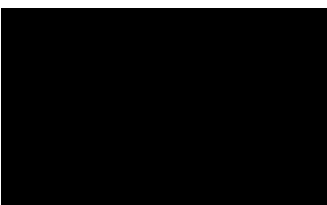
Summary

2. This regular meeting is an opportunity to discuss our work programme, and further progress towards better mental health and wellbeing for Aotearoa. We propose the following agenda:
 - COVID-19 insights series, including Pacific wellbeing
 - Te Huringa service monitoring reports, including Pacific services and workforce
 - Youth wellbeing, and online safety.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **note** Te Hiringa Mahara intends to proactively release this briefing as part of our proactive release policy **Yes / No**
- b) **note** that this briefing will shape the discussion on 8 June 2023 **Yes / No**



Karen Orsborn
Chief Executive
Date: 30/05/2023

Hon Barbara Edmonds
Associate Minister of Health (Pacific)
Date:

Meeting with Te Hiringa Mahara

Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

COVID-19 insights series, including Pacific wellbeing

Pacific wellbeing

1. We have been supported by Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP) in developing the 7th COVID-19 insights paper, focusing on connection as a key part of Pacific Peoples' wellbeing. The paper will be released on 8 June, the same day as this meeting. You have separately received a briefing and an embargoed copy of the paper and high-level communications plan [BN2023-016 refers].
2. MPP's Lalanga Fou and related work has been invaluable and have shaped the scope and the findings of this paper. The key findings of this paper highlight that Pacific peoples' connection – to family, community, culture and faith – have been a key source of strength and resilience in the pandemic:
 - Pacific peoples endured some of the worst impacts of the pandemic, and this included serious disruption to the ways they connect with family, community, church and culture.
 - Pacific peoples' connectedness enabled them to provide flexible and practical support to each other during the pandemic, and to support shared wellbeing.
 - Pacific peoples have shown that they know how to support their communities - we can support greater wellbeing by listening to Pacific peoples, involving them in decision-making, and trusting and resourcing them to support each other and their communities.
3. MPP has provided useful information and contacts to support this paper, which has been greatly appreciated. Through this work, our two organisations have furthered our working relationships at a number of levels. We have built on this to engage with MPP and a range of other agencies who are focused on Pacific wellbeing (including the Ministries for Social Development; Education; Housing and Urban Development; and Business, Innovation and Employment; as well as NZ Police and the Treasury), to share approaches and aims for supporting Pacific wellbeing outcomes.

Rangatiratanga

4. In early May, we released our 6th paper in the COVID-19 series, on exercising tino rangatiratanga. This paper shows that Māori knowledge, skills, and resources were vital to protecting the wellbeing of communities and whānau during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Learning from past events, such as the 1918 influenza epidemic and Māori responses to it, a number of Māori communities identified flaws or gaps in the nation-wide pandemic responses, from the beginning.
 - Through a range of initiatives, the Māori pandemic response makes it clear that Māori know what to do in the face of crises, and that what works for Māori will

- benefit all peoples of Aotearoa.
- Māori responses to the pandemic can continue to be an exemplar for how Aotearoa can support health and wellbeing outcomes in any future crises, and support wellbeing more generally. A wider challenge remains around sustained support and resources to continue to deliver for their communities.

Upcoming paper – summary of findings

5. We are currently working on the 8th and final paper of the COVID-19 insights series. This paper will bring together the key and common findings from our previous papers on wellbeing during the pandemic, with additional new information to test the applicability of these findings to other priority populations.
6. The intent of this paper is not to rehash our existing findings, but to highlight where there are common threads across priority populations and understand where our findings are less universal.
7. We intend to publish this final paper in the week of 19 June; you will receive a further briefing on this closer to that date.

Te Huringa service monitoring reports

Te Huringa Tuarua 2023, Mental health and addiction services monitoring report

8. Our report into mental health and addiction services will be published tomorrow, Wednesday 31 May 2023. The report explores what has changed in the mental health and addiction system over the last year and what needs to improve.
9. The report covers mental health services and addiction services funded by the public health system, including primary and specialist mental health and addiction services.
10. The report finds that referral pathways for Māori and Pacific peoples are different from other population groups. Pacific peoples have higher referral rates into specialist mental health and addiction services from the justice sector. In 2021/22, 5.5 per cent of referrals for Pacific peoples came from courts, compared with 2.6 per cent of non-Māori, non-Pacific referrals. In contrast, in 2021/22 referrals coming from GPs account for 10 per cent of Pacific referrals, which is about half the rate for non-Māori, non-Pacific peoples (21 per cent). These findings, along with the higher rate of use of specialist services among Pacific peoples, indicate that Pacific peoples may not have access to appropriate treatment and support services early in the course of their mental distress.
11. Māori and Pacific peoples continue to be subject to coercive treatments such as compulsory community treatment orders and solitary confinement (seclusion) at higher rates than other population groups.
12. There has been progress with supporting Pacific students with careers in mental health and addiction services. In 2022 there were 125 scholarships for Pacific students, which is approximately double the number in 2018.

13. We have also seen an increase in the number of Pacific cultural competency training places for the mental health and addiction workforce. From 2019 to 2022, the number of training places increased from 750 to 1,200 places for Pacific training.

Youth services report

14. On 17 May, during Youth Week, we released Te Huringa Tuarua 2023: Youth services focus report. This report shows that:
 - In-line with international trends, there are high and increasing levels of distress amongst children and adolescents reported within Aotearoa.
 - The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an additional burden, with younger people disproportionately affected.
 - Compared with other ethnic identities, rangatahi Māori reported the highest rates of depressive symptoms, followed closely by Pacific youth.
 - However, Pacific young people have lower rates of child and adolescent service use than Māori or European/other young people.
15. Without effective support and intervention, negative consequences of mental distress in young people may continue into adulthood and can be a predictor for poorer wellbeing outcomes over an individual's lifetime.
16. It is particularly important that young people receive effective and age-appropriate services when they are most distressed and in need of acute care. The Youth report shows ongoing use of adult inpatient mental health services for young people experiencing acute distress – a practice that we want to see end, with age-appropriate and accessible services to take its place.

Youth wellbeing, and online safety

Youth wellbeing report

17. Our Youth Wellbeing Report was also released during Youth Week (15 May). The report highlights and discusses young peoples' concerns about prominent causes of distress:
 - Uncertain futures
 - Racism and Discrimination
 - Harm from digital communication (including social media)
 - Intergenerational Connection
18. Under these themes, the report identifies areas where young people have told us they want to see action.

Social media and related work

19. Our two youth reports are shaping the priorities of our ongoing youth wellbeing advocacy. As discussed previously, one area we are looking into is social media and its impact on mental health and wellbeing.
20. As you will be aware, there is a lot of different work underway in this space, across government and non-government organisations. Since we last met, we have

undertaken a brief stocktake of relevant work, and engaged with key organisations including Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), to discuss and agree areas of involvement for Te Hiringa Mahara.

21. Last time we met you mentioned us 'championing' this work, which is a priority for you. Given our size, areas of expertise, and what we know about other work underway, it is likely that our role will focus on:
 - Ensuring a wellbeing lens is brought to policy and decision-making on social media, recognising the varied positive and negative impacts social media has.
 - Raising the voices of young people, who have a different experience of social media to older generations, and who are calling for action that recognises that social media is inextricably linked to every facet of their lives, and that makes those environments safer.
 - Ensuring policy work recognises that social media is more a catalyst than cause of distress and poor wellbeing. The issues highlighted by young people (such as uncertain futures and climate change; racism and discrimination; harm from digital communication; and challenges with intergenerational connection) exist outside of social media and need to be addressed in their own right.
22. Your assistance with ensuring we can bring these necessary points of view to the appropriate policy and decision-making tables would be valuable and appreciated. Ideally, we would advise the teams doing the work, to share what we have learned; engage with project's oversight group to ensure that wellbeing is a key framing of the work, and that young people are involved as appropriate; and have the opportunity to review the policy proposals as the work progresses.
23. As above, we are already engaged with the DIA team undertaking the work, but if you could signal your support or advocacy for our involvement, that would be helpful to ensure we can champion this work, and the views of young people, at multiple levels.

Next steps

24. We will brief you on the work outlined in this briefing and discuss where we can work together.

ENDS