

Briefing

Meeting with Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

Date due to MO:	6/06/2025	Action required by:	NA
Security level:	UNCLASSIFIED	Briefing number:	BN2025-008
To:	Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health		
	[REDACTED]		

Contact for Telephone Discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
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Minister's Office to Complete

<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 Withdrawn	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: 6/06/2025

To: Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a proposed agenda and key discussion points for a meeting with you, Hayden Wano, Board Chair and Karen Orsborn, Chief Executive of Te Hiringa Mahara - Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (the Commission) on Monday 16 June 2025.

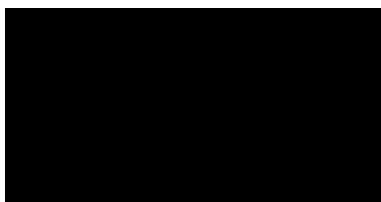
Proposed agenda

2. We propose the following items for discussion:
 - i. System Performance monitoring
 - ii. Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy development
 - iii. Letter of Expectations, Future Excellence Horizon, SOI and SPE
 - iv. Mental Health Bill and national conversation about safety and risk
 - v. Board appointments

Recommendations

We recommend you:

a) note the contents of this briefing.	Yes / No
b) note the Commission intends to proactively release this briefing as part of our proactive release policy.	Yes / No



Chief Executive

Date: 6/06/2025

Hon Matt Doocey
Minister for Mental Health

Date:

Meeting with Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

For discussion

System performance monitoring

1. Our independent statutory monitoring role uniquely places us to assess determinants and system level contribution to mental health and wellbeing outcomes for people with lived experience of mental distress and addictions. In our approach to system performance monitoring, we have brought together a shared view of what a good mental health and addiction system looks like, and the six key system shifts required to achieve mental health and wellbeing.
2. The shifts we want to see in the mental health and addiction system include prioritising lived and living experience, responding to need through effective service provision, promoting primary prevention and early intervention approaches, with a focus on equitable service access and outcomes while upholding human rights practices and supported by a workforce that is capable, competent and meets need.
3. Included in our approach are recommendations of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (the He Ara Oranga Report), our partner He Ara Āwhina System and Services Framework and He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework, as well as key documents such as Kia Manawanui and Government mental health priorities. We worked with system leaders across government, sector and with lived experience communities to understand what good system performance monitoring looks like and how we could apply this to the mental health and addiction system.
4. We are publishing our approach to system performance which includes assessment of progress towards six key system shifts on 11 June 2025 which include the mental health targets. A separate briefing has been provided [refer BN2025-009] to your office outlining the key shifts and findings.
5. The report is a key input into our advice to the Ministry of Health on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The six key shifts form an evidence-based approach to understanding what is needed to transform the mental health and addiction system.

Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy development

6. As outlined in our letter to you on 12 May 2025, we are engaging with the Ministry on the development of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. On 26 May 2025 we provided the Ministry and yourself our initial advice on what we would look for in the draft Strategy.

7. On 28 May 2025 we received the first draft and provided feedback in line with our initial advice and work to date on 6 June 2025. In line with the Pae Ora Act, we will provide you a copy of our feedback to the Ministry and intend to publish that advice. We will continue to provide information and advice to the Ministry, alongside information on the System Performance Shifts (described above), and how they could be reflected in the Strategy.

Letter of Expectations, Future Excellence Horizon, SOI and SPE

8. We have received comments from the Ministry of Health on your behalf on our 2025-2029 SOI and 2025/26 SPE. The SOI and SPE are the first under our new strategy. They incorporate your expectations outlined in the LOE, particularly a strong cross-government focus, reduction of duplication, collaboration particularly with the Ministry of Health and Health NZ, and our approach to monitoring suicide prevention.
9. Our 2025-2029 Strategy and subsequent SOI was informed by the engagement undertaken to develop our Future Excellence Horizon. The Future Excellence Horizon outlines the mental health and wellbeing outcomes the people of Aotearoa will expect in the future and the key performance challenges the Commission is expected to respond to. It articulates our key strategic shifts -
 - From a broad all of population focus on wellbeing to placing people with lived experience at the centre of our work to focus on tangible improvement for tangata whaiora.
 - From a focus on monitoring and reporting to being future orientated, promoting alignment and leveraging knowledge and insights to influence positive change.
 - From building our foundations to being a bolder advocate, publicly holding the system to account and keeping the spotlight on mental health and wellbeing.

Mental Health Bill and national conversation about safety and risk

10. The LOE articulates your expectation related to development of the Mental Health Bill and the need to prepare the system for shifts in practice, and the wider public for shifts in attitudes. We would like to discuss the role you see for the Commission to provide leadership in a national conversation about risk and mental health.

Board appointments

11. We have three members whose terms on the Board ended at the beginning of February 2025 and a further member with their term finishing in July 2025. We understand the Ministry is undertaking an open process of appointments. We are keen to discuss progress with the appointments of the members and Board Chair.

For noting

Upcoming publications

Publication	Date
Assessment of wellbeing for people who interact with mental health and addiction services – infographic	25 June 2025
Crisis Response literature review	Early July

He Ara Āwhina dashboard and supplementary infographics

12. In early June we published an update to the online He Ara Āwhina service monitoring dashboard and two supplementary infographics. The two infographics tell a visual story using relevant measures from He Ara Āwhina dashboard and are focussed on (1) access to mental health and addiction services; and (2) specialist addiction services. A separate briefing has been provided [refer BN2025-007] outlining the approach and key findings.

Access to mental health and addiction services infographic

13. Access to mental health and addiction services has decreased. There were over 16,000 fewer people using specialist mental health and addiction services in 2023/24 than in 2020/21. The population access rate in 2023/24 was 3.3 per cent, which is lower than the historical 10-year trend between 3.5 and 3.8 per cent. We are seeing continued pressures in the system including rising vacancy rates for medical practitioners. Significant improvement is needed to support access to services by rangatahi and young people.

Access to specialist addiction services infographic

14. This is the first time we have reported specifically on specialist addiction services. Addiction specialist services are seeing a similar decline in people accessing these services, and a proportionate decrease in investment compared to mental health services. Wait times into specialist addiction services are below the Government target, and the percentage of referrals that are declined has increased over the last five years.

The online He Ara Āwhina dashboard is being refreshed with data to June 2024 (where available)

15. We currently use 76 measures to monitor mental health and addictions services against the 12 He Ara Āwhina framework domains. We have refreshed this measure set to ensure it remains relevant and current and will publish the updated dashboard alongside our system performance monitoring report [ref BN2025-009].

Assessment of wellbeing outcomes for people who interact with mental health and addiction services

16. On 25 June we will publish our assessment of wellbeing outcomes for people who interact with mental health and addiction services. We compare findings with the rest of the population to give us a picture of the status of mental health and wellbeing.
17. We focussed on people who interact with mental health and addictions services as an approximation of people with lived experience of mental distress and addiction in the community. We constructed this cohort from national administrative datasets. However, we recognise that lived experience is a broader term including people seeking wellness that do, and do not, interact with mental health and addiction supports and services. We reported against 22 He Ara Oranga Wellbeing Outcomes Framework indicators.
18. Our assessment shows that in comparison to people who do not use services, people who interact with mental health and addiction services continue to experience poorer overall health and wellbeing outcomes and in particular, face ongoing systemic inequities in the determinants of wellbeing, such as income opportunities.
19. Our findings will inform our advice to the Ministry of Health on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This analysis will support focused effort on specific cross-government actions that will address determinants in the Strategy.
20. We will provide a substantive briefing and final draft infographic in early June prior to publication. We plan to host a webinar in July to share and promote this work.

Update on Access and Choice

21. The 2025 Access and Choice monitoring report was published on 3 April. At the time of writing Health NZ have not shared the draft Action Plan for review as requested by you.
22. On 11 June 2025, we are hosting a hui with Kaupapa Māori Service Leaders to share the key findings of the Access and Choice report and strengthen connections across the mental health and wellbeing sector.

Review of treaty clauses in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act

23. As you are aware, the Government is conducting a comprehensive review of all legislation (except when it is related to, or substantive to, existing full and final Treaty settlements) that includes references to 'The Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.'
24. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission Act 2020 (MHWB Act) is listed as one of the twenty-eight pieces of legislation to be reviewed.
25. The Ministry of Justice is the lead agency for the review and will oversee and coordinate the overall review. The Ministry of Health is coordinating the review of our Act. We met with the Ministry on 21 May to further discuss processes and timeframes.

Suicide Prevention Action Plan

26. In November and February, we provided input to the development of the draft Suicide Prevention Action Plan, though we did not see our advice reflected in the plan.
27. The LOE notes your expectation regarding including a focus on suicide prevention and the delivery of the 2025-2029 Action Plan within our monitoring role. We are working with the Ministry of Health to understand their monitoring plans and how the Commission will add value.

New Zealand Forum

28. The first annual conference co-hosted by the Commission and TheMHS is being held in Tamaki Makaurau on 5 November 2025 at Waipuna Hotel. For 2025, the event name will be **Waenga Mōrearea: He Ara Oranga**. This signifies the key focus of the forum, that in times of significant crisis and distress, pathways to urgent mental health care and support are available.
29. The content of the forum will be focused on crisis responses and will align with the publication of the Commission's monitoring report on this topic. The forum focus area aligns with the priorities for mental health, specifically increasing access to mental health and addiction support and improving the effectiveness of mental health and addiction support.
30. We are working with your office to confirm your attendance at the Forum and will provide further detail once the programme is finalised.

Next Steps

31. We will continue to keep you abreast of our work programme and strategic direction through briefings and regular meetings.

ENDS