

## **Summary version of the Initial Commission's progress report**

### **Mā Te Rongo Ake / Through Listening and Hearing**

#### **About this report**

Mā Te Rongo Ake (Through Listening and Hearing) is a report from the Initial Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission to the Minister of Health. The report assesses progress of the Government's response to He Ara Oranga, the inquiry into mental health and addiction. The report also describes how Government can uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The inquiry called for transformation of the mental health and addiction system (the system) and described a vision where a good level of mental wellbeing is attainable for everyone, outcomes are equitable across the whole of society, and people who experience mental illness and distress have the resilience, tools and support they need to regain their wellbeing.

This report addresses the question: "how is system transformation progressing?" and asks:

- what progress is government making in its response to He Ara Oranga?
- is progress happening fast enough (and how much further is there to go)?
- what areas need further focus or priority?

This report was based on what the Initial Commission heard from:

- whānau Māori;
- disabled people;
- Pacific peoples;
- rainbow communities;
- other groups with disproportionately poorer mental health and wellbeing outcomes;
- people with lived experience of mental health and addiction and their families, whānau and caregivers.

## **How is the Government responding to He Ara Oranga?**

Government is committed to responding to He Ara Oranga and is spending money on improving the mental health and wellbeing system.

Government has prioritised work on:

- increasing access and choice of mental health and addiction services;
- focusing on suicide prevention;
- repealing and replacing the Mental Health Act 1992;
- establishing a Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission.

People and communities called for change in He Ara Oranga that has still yet to happen.

- People and communities are concerned that there is no formal, written plan to implement recommendations from He Ara Oranga.

- People and communities would like to be more involved in designing and developing new mental health and wellbeing services.
- He Ara Oranga called for more options and choice for people who need support. People are not yet seeing the range of services they want, like peer support and kaupapa Māori services.
- It is taking time to transform the system, but communities want to see change happen faster.
- People and communities are frustrated that investment is not being targeted to those who need more support.

To transform the mental health and wellbeing system, everyone needs to work together. This will take time, focus and leadership.

- Communities are already delivering transformative services, such as Te Waharoa, Do Good Feel Good, Kotuku House, and FLO: Pasifika for Life.
- The Wellbeing Budget has resulted in Government agencies and Ministers working together on initiatives to improve wellbeing for people in Aotearoa.
- Cross-agency work can help transform the system for people who need support. This work should involve people with mental distress so that services and initiatives meet the needs of communities.
- Leadership should support collaboration, inclusiveness and partnerships.

The Initial Commission has advice for the Government to support transformation of the mental health and wellbeing system:

- Uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi by working in partnership and sharing power with Māori.

- Develop a plan to implement *He Ara Oranga*. This plan should include all Government agencies and be developed with people and communities.
- Work together like we did when responding to COVID-19 in 2020. This means making fast decisions, having trust, and working with communities.
- Make sure that services and resources are reaching the right people at the right time.
- Improve technology and funding so that providers can deliver more services that respond to individual and cultural needs.
- Improve how mental health and wellbeing outcomes are measured and monitored.