

MAC Assessment of Te Whatu Ora Data and Digital Service – Preliminary Response

Te Whatu Ora has considered the findings of the assessment and makes the following observations, particularly related to the context and constraints within which the review was conducted.

As context, before the 28 health entities came together, there was no national picture of the ICT landscape, and no due diligence of the assets, workforce, projects or financial structure. Given mixed capability and performance across previous entities, including inconsistencies in documentation, reporting, and risk assessment, the scale of this challenge is also still emerging. Historical under-investment in ICT nationally, compounded by a lack of investment coherence across former districts, has resulted in significant tech debt that complicates the work we must now undertake.

The assessment makes several recommendations, most of which relate to work we have completed or have significantly advanced, including measures to address legacy issues. For example:

- We have a confirmed operating model for D&D that will be refined overtime, and we are now implementing a new structure to better align roles to our current and future needs.
- Governance arrangements are in place to provide oversight and scrutiny, along with a strategy and roadmap reflecting national priorities. This includes simplification and standardisation; we have stopped proliferation of new IT products and services (we inherited over 1500 projects) and are replacing end-of-life systems with fewer, better national platforms. This tighter focus will help accelerate the system improvements that are needed.
- Key projects and programmes (including Hira) have been strengthened, including their governance, to more closely align with priorities and the improvements that are most needed. A new investment portfolio approach has also been introduced to redirect effort and investment on national priorities, enabling more equitable and effective delivery across the country.

Contextually, our D&D directorate was not formally formed until January 2023, with services until then substantively managed locally. This was to ensure continuity and stability while the system was still coping with Covid-19 responses and the model for change was being developed.

The assessment should have also, in our view, considered ICT progress and investment in other comparable health systems, where increased digital investment has been integral to healthcare modernisation. This external focus is critical to draw lessons to inform progress here.

To close, our digital delivery momentum continues to build. The new D&D structure enables faster, smoother rollout of national ICT services, such as the Oracle-based Finance, Procurement and Information Management (FPIM) system, as well as National Screening solutions (e.g., HPV Testing).

We recognise the critical importance of data and digital to modernising health services, including to reduce burden on clinicians and better meet New Zealanders' expectations and health needs. We look forward to the continued work of the Ministerial Advisory Committee in supporting this direction.



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