

# Public Health Advisory Committee

## Minutes of Meeting

**Meeting:** Wednesday 22 February 2023, 9:30am to 4:30pm

### Attendees

PHAC Members: Kevin Hague (Chair), Peter Crampton, Jason Gurney, Ruth Cunningham, Sir Collin Tukuitonga

Secretariat: Jonathon Jones and Chloe Reynolds

Guests: Simon Medcalf, Emma Quealey, Kathrine Clarke, Hilary Sharpe, Anna Jackson, Ross Bell, Michelle Mako and Kim Dougall

Apologies: Beverly Te Huia

### Opening of meeting

1. Opening karakia by Jason Gurney.
2. Noted Beverley Te Huia's apology due to Cyclone Gabrielle and its impact on the Hawkes Bay. Welcome to Collin as he was absent at last meeting due to sickness. Members introduced themselves to Collin.
3. Members asked to update declarations of interest. No new interests noted.
4. Review of 27 January 2023 minutes. Members agreed minutes were accurate and correct.

### Actions:

- Chair asked Secretariat to develop a risk register ahead of next meeting.
- 27 January 2023 minutes and agenda to be published to PHAC website.

### Pae Ora Strategies

5. Simon Medcalf, Group Manager Strategy and Emma Quealey, Principal Analyst Strategy gave an update on the Pae Ora strategy development.
6. The strategies are a key part of the health system reform. They will set the medium-term horizon. The Pae Ora Act requires 6 strategies: New Zealand

health strategy, Hauora Māori, women's, rural, Pacific and health of disabled people. A health outcomes framework is also being developed.

7. The team is currently in the engagement phase involving community focused engagements as well as webinars. Strategies will be further developed and tested over coming months with the opportunity for further involvement of the PHAC.
8. The team was asked whether the strategies would have a strong Te Tiriti o Waitangi focus. Te Tiriti o Waitangi will feature across the strategy development work. The Māori Health Directorate are leading on the Hauora Māori strategy, which includes a whānau centered approach threaded throughout, and the treaty is explicitly mentioned.
9. Emma Quealey updated the PHAC on the NZ Health Strategy, noting its purpose was to achieve Pae Ora (healthy futures). It aims to achieve healthy people, families and communities and has a focus on equity of health outcomes.
10. They discussed how the PHAC can work with the Pae Ora strategy team. The chair noted their work schedule and proposed that in March they could hear about how engagement process and engage further in April, May and June as the strategies take shape.
11. Simon Medcalf noted that leads of individual strategies could meet with PHAC and talk through different areas. By April the strategies should be further fleshed out.

**Actions:**

- PHAC to invite Simon and Emma to their next meeting.
- PHAC to invite leads for the Hauora Māori and Pacific strategies.

**PHAC Work programme**

12. PHAC secretariat presented a paper setting out a work plan for the PHAC's work in 2023. The paper covered the work on the Pae Ora Strategies, food environments and space for the PHAC to begin work on a new major topic in the second half of the year, after it completed work on the Pae Ora strategies.

13. On the Pae Ora strategies, PHAC discussed how it could work with the strategy team over the coming months, ahead of the strategies being completed at the end of June 2023.

**Actions:**

- Secretariat to draft letter to Strategy team summarising how the PHAC wishes to engage on the Pae Ora strategy development work.

**Project scope: Food Environments**

14. PHAC Secretariat presented a paper scoping the food environments topic. The paper summarised various approaches, including the determinants of health and a rights-based approach. The paper also provided international comparisons and detailed areas such as te ao Māori perspectives.
15. The PHAC noted that there wasn't value in re-reviewing material and that it should focus on what was working in New Zealand but also how New Zealand compares internationally. The PHAC discussed the complex nature of food environments, particularly how food is influenced by external factors, i.e. international food markets. The focus should be on identifying effective solutions, even if that was a focus on less but those which have impact.
16. The chair highlighted the rights-based approach and encouraged the rights-based approach as the way to frame the PHAC's advice. Beginning with the outcome being sought, who's rights and those not with rights, options analysis, underpinned by a strengths-based approach.

**Action:**

- PHAC to write an introductory letter to Director-General of MPI, Ray Smith to advise of the PHAC's work and acknowledge that much of the policy work in this area is led by MPI.

**Discussion on Te Ao Māori perspectives on kai**

17. The PHAC met with Kathrine Clarke, Director of Health Promotion, Te Whatu Ora (formally Interim Director of Public Health at Te Aka Whai Ora) to discuss Te Ao Māori perspectives of kai.
18. The chair noted that food environments have a wide scope and the PHAC is working to determine what should be in/out of scope for its work, and how the

PHAC can best add-value. The PHAC wants to base its advice around Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

19. Kathrine Clarke reflected the Māori public health lens, which is a focus on those things that enhance hauora more than just keeping us well. She noted the whakataukī: *Ka ora te whenua, ka ora te tāngata - When the land is well, we are well.*
20. She highlighted issues such as access to whenua for food production, noting that housing and urban environments had shifted that practice for many Māori. Rental housing was an issue for growing food. She noted the Māori concept of mahinga kai – the ability to grow and collect food, and how this might operate in an urban setting. She referred to climate change and food environments, which required consideration.
21. The chair reflected on Cyclone Gabrielle and the situation in Hawkes Bay.
22. Kathrine Clarke noted infrastructure and supply chain issues, commenting that there was limited connectivity in Northland. The group discussed resilient and sustainable communities, and environmental impacts. They discussed impacts of urbanisation but that there were some signs of people returning home to their whenua.

### **Public Health Agency presentation and discussion on food environments**

23. The Public Health Agency (PHA) presented on food environments. The presentation included an overview of the evidence, which highlighted the disproportionate effects of poor diets on Māori and Pacific people, including the impact on other treatments.
24. Risks were highlighted and included the increased presence of fast-food outlets in lower socio-economic areas, increases in packaged foods in food outlets, and the rising cost of food and vegetables. It was noted that when food is scarce – there is a tendency to purchase cheap energy dense foods.
25. For Māori, many traditional practices had been eroded, so approaches to improve food environments must be embedded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi with greater active protection.
26. On the evidence base, the Te Aho o Te Kahu – Cancer Control Agency report *Pūrongo Ārai Mate Pukupuku, Cancer Prevention Report* section on preventing

cancers related to nutrition and excess body weight, sets out how big the problem of poor diet and excess body weight is in Aotearoa.

27. Previous government interventions were described, including Healthy Eating and Healthy Action (HEHA). Other work included a childhood obesity plan and food industry taskforce. The Healthy Families initiatives is on-going – localities are using healthy family approaches.
28. The health system is currently working on food environments and includes a cross-agency food environment steering group.

### **Meeting with Te Aka Whai Ora**

29. The PHAC met with Kim Dougall, General Manager, Public and Population Health, Te Aka Whai Ora to share PHAC's thinking on food environments and seek views.
30. PHAC shared their interest in a rights-based approach to the topic of food environments. Mahinga kai and food security is of interest to Te Aka Whai Ora. It was noted that work was already being done by Māori providers.
31. PHAC would like to work with Te Aka Whai Ora on their current and future workstreams, with each seeking the others advice.

### **Next steps**

32. PHAC agreed to pursue a review of the evidence and seek to work with the PHA. The review is to focus on a rights-based approach – national and international literature concerning a rights-based approach to food, with particular reference to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and food. The review is to cover the topics of community interventions with their impacts, barriers to regulatory policy in a local context, fiscal measures that have been effective, food security and mahinga kai initiatives and food sovereignty – local food systems. The review should include non-traditional mediums, social comments, identify further stakeholders, and eliminate some too.
33. PHAC agreed to request the PHA to make resources available to appoint an expert advisor, but that they do not have an advisor to appoint at this moment.

34. PHAC agreed to commission a topic analysis from the secretariat, covering the rights-based approach and a summary of rights in international covenants and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
35. PHAC secretariat will work with the PHA Hauora Māori team and seek an update on work in the area of te ao Māori perspectives on food.
36. For the March meeting, the PHAC would like a human rights presentation and focus the meeting on fleshing out their thinking on food environments.
37. PHAC agreed that Human Rights Commissioner, Paul Hunt would be useful to invite to the next meeting, and to advise as it continues its work.
38. PHAC to further develop and add to their stakeholder map. PHAC secretariat to reach out to Christina McKerchar on rights-based approach.

**Actions:**

- PHAC to write to the PHA setting out resources it requires –an evidence review, expert advisor and an update on te ao Māori perspectives.
- PHAC to invite Human Rights Commissioner to its next meeting in March.
- PHAC to continue to build contacts, including Christina McKerchar.

**Next meeting**

39. The next PHAC meeting will be held in-person in Wellington on Tuesday 21 March 2023.