

Briefing

Petition of Millicent Dickenson: Subsidise degrees that lead to mental health jobs – for Ministerial consultation

Date due to MO: 25 March 2024 **Action required by:** 26 March 2024

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Health Report number:** H2024037769

To: Hon Matt Doocoy, Minister for Mental Health

Consulted: Health New Zealand: Māori Health Authority:

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Robyn Shearer	Deputy Director-General, Clinical Community and Mental Health Te Pou Whakakaha	s 9(2)(a)
Kiri Richards	Associate Deputy Director-General, Clinical Community and Mental Health Te Pou Whakakaha	s 9(2)(a)

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 events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | |

Comment:

Petition of Millicent Dickenson: Subsidise degrees that lead to mental health jobs – For Ministerial consultation

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Date:** 25 March 2024

To: Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health

Purpose of report

1. This briefing provides a draft Cabinet paper and your response to the petition 'Millicent Dickenson: Subsidise degrees that lead to mental health jobs'.
2. These papers are recommended for consultation with the Minister of Education and the Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills, prior to finalised versions being lodged on 4 April 2024 for Cabinet Legislation Committee (LEG).

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** officials are available to discuss and receive your feedback on the attached Cabinet paper **Noted**
- b) **Agree** to circulate the draft Cabinet paper and your response to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills **Yes/No**
- c) **Note** you will receive an updated Cabinet paper and response paper for lodging on 4 April 2024, for consideration at the Cabinet Legislation Committee meeting on 11 April 2024. **Noted**
- d) **Note** your response to the petition must be tabled in the House by 1 May 2024. **Noted**

Dr Diana Sarfati
Director-General of Health
Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Hauora
Date:

Hon Matt Doocey
Minister for Mental Health
Date:

Petition of Millicent Dickenson: Subsidise degrees that lead to mental health jobs – For Ministerial consultation

Background

1. On 15 February 2024, the Petitions Committee referred the petition 'Millicent Dickenson: Subsidise degrees that lead to mental health jobs' to you for direct response.
2. The Petitions Committee did not seek a submission on the Petition from the Ministry of Health before referring it directly to you as Minister for Mental Health for response.
3. The petitioner (Millicent Dickenson) recommends that the Government introduce subsidies for degrees that lead to employment in the mental health and addiction workforce. The petitioner sees mental health and addiction workforce shortages as being due to a financial burden experienced by students when studying.
4. Under Standing Order 380, you have 60 working days from when the petition was referred to you to table a response in the House, so by 1 May 2024. Before you can table the response, you must first get this noted by the LEG Cabinet Legislation Committee (LEG). The last date that LEG meets prior to 1 May 2024 is 11 April 2024.
5. Officials have drafted a Cabinet paper and appended a draft response from you to the petition. These papers have had initial input from Health New Zealand, the Ministry of Education and Tertiary Education Commission.

Response to petitioners' recommendations

6. The draft Cabinet paper and your response acknowledge shortages within the mental health workforce and note that growing and sustaining the mental health and addiction workforce is priority for you as the Minister for Mental Health.
7. Tertiary sector support for the cost of study is noted, and current Health New Zealand initiatives are outlined that are increasing the numbers and range of students undertaking mental health and addiction study.
8. While there is a range of existing allowances and scholarships, it is acknowledged that more needs to be done to support workforce growth. Your priorities around expanding the number of psychiatric registrar places and clinical psychology internship places are noted, while there are also opportunities to foster a wide range of other clinical and non-clinical workforces.
9. The papers conclude that close consideration will be given to expanding and enhancing initiatives that will enhance momentum in growing this vital workforce.

Equity

10. The draft Cabinet paper and your response provide information on Health New Zealand funding that encourages student enrolments that are more representative of the New Zealand population. This includes scholarships for Māori, Pacific and Muslim students, as

well as support for those with lived experience, to study for mental health and addiction careers.

Next steps

11. It is recommended that the draft Cabinet paper and your response be forwarded to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills for any comments. Officials are available to discuss any feedback you may have on the papers.
12. The proposed timeline for the Cabinet paper is as follows:

Action	Date
Draft papers are forwarded to the Minister of Education and Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills for any comments	26 March 2024
Ministerial feedback is received	By the end of 2 April 2024
Revised papers are provided to your office	3 April 2024
Cabinet LEG paper is lodged	4 April 2024
Talking points are provided to your office	By 9 April 2024
Cabinet LEG meeting	11 April 2024

13. As noted, following Cabinet LEG approval, your response to the petition must be tabled in the House by 1 May 2024. Tabling of documents needs to be arranged via the office of the Leader of the House. The Ministry can support your office to do this, if required.

ENDS.