

# Briefing

## PHAC report on our food system – background information

<b>Date due to MO:</b> 30 April 2024	<b>Action required by:</b> 6 May 2024
<b>Security level:</b> IN CONFIDENCE	<b>Health Report number:</b> H2024040136
<b>To:</b> Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister of Health	
<b>Consulted:</b> Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>	

### Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
<b>Dr Andrew Old</b>	Deputy Director-General, Public Health Agency   Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui	s 9(2)(a)
<b>Michelle Mako</b>	Director Māori Public Health, Public Health Agency   Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui	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 Withdrawn |  |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:

# PHAC report on our food system – background information

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**Security level:** IN CONFIDENCE      **Date:** 30 April 2024

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**To:** Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister of Health

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## Purpose of report

1. This report provides you with background information and talking points to support your response to the publication of the Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) report titled 'Rebalancing our food system', which will be proactively released on 15 May 2024.
2. This report is intended as a high-level summary only. We recommend that you commission more detailed advice regarding the recommendations of the 'Rebalancing our food system' report.

## Summary

3. The PHAC intends to publish its first major topic report – *Rebalancing our food system* (the Report)– on the Ministry of Health website on 15 May 2024.
4. A copy of the Report was provided to you on 12 April 2024 by the PHAC Chair, Kevin Hague. An earlier draft was also provided to you in March 2024 (H2024037114 refers).
5. The Report was commissioned by the Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall when she held the role of Minister of Health.
6. We have been advised by the PHAC it intends to support the release of the Report with a media release and an opinion piece by the PHAC Chair.
7. The PHAC is an independent expert advisory committee established in July 2022 under section 93 of the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022. The committee looks at the long-term health challenges facing New Zealand, and advises on innovative and practical solutions. A list of the members that contributed to the Report is included in Appendix 1.
8. The Public Health Agency (PHA) provides secretariat support to the PHAC but has not had substantive input into the content of the Report.
9. In summary, the Report provides a view of the New Zealand food system, describes a case for change, and considers barriers to, and options for, strengthening the way the system impacts on population health and wellbeing.
10. The Report makes 13 specific recommendations, under 5 broad headings. These are provided in Appendix 2.
11. The recommendations are far-reaching, and fall under the portfolios of various Ministers, including for example the Minister for Food Safety, the Associate Minister of Education (with delegation for food in schools), the Minister for Social Development and Employment, the Associate Minister of Health (with delegation for nutrition and physical

activity), and the Minister of Local Government. Cross-government input would be needed to fully consider and respond to the recommendations.

12. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
13. The Report does not provide information on the cost to implement the recommendations.
14. Proposed reactive talking points are provided in Appendix 3.

### Next steps

15. Subject to your agreement, the PHA will lead the development of a cross-agency response to the report.

### Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** that the PHAC will publish the Report, *Rebalancing our food system*, on the PHAC section of the Ministry of Health website on 15 May 2024. **Noted**
- b) **Note** that the Report's recommendations are far-reaching, and if implemented would have implications across a number of Ministerial portfolios. **Noted**
- c) **Share** the PHAC Report and this Briefing with the Minister for Food Safety, the Associate Minister of Education (with delegation for food in schools), the Minister for Social Development and Employment, the Associate Minister of Health (with delegation for nutrition and physical activity) and the Minister of Local Government. **Yes/No**
- d) **Note** that should you agree to the Report being shared with the Ministers above, that PHA officials will share the Report in confidence with other relevant government officials to enable them to brief their Ministers accordingly in advance of publication. **Noted**
- e) **Request** further advice from the Public Health Agency regarding a cross-agency response to the Report and its recommendations. **Yes/No**



Tagaloa Dr Junior Ulu  
Acting Deputy-Director General

**Public Health Agency**

Date: 24 April 2024

Hon Dr Shane Reti

**Minister of Health**

Date:

## Minister's Notes

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## **Appendix 1 – Authors of PHAC Report**

Kevin Hague (Chair)

Sir Collin Tukuitonga [PHAC member December 2022 to December 2023]

Beverly Te Huia

Associate Professor Jason Gurney

Associate Professor Ruth Cunningham

Professor Peter Crampton

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## Appendix 2 – PHAC Report recommendations

### ***Develop a unified food system for all New Zealanders***

Recommendation 1: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government, in partnership with communities to **develop a National Food Strategy** to deliver a rebalanced food system that upholds Te Tiriti, and prioritises the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders, Indigenous (Māori) rights, and protecting the environment, ahead of economic goals.

Recommendation 2: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **establish a cross-government entity and/or Ministerial responsibility for food and food security**, which has overall accountability for the food system meeting the goals of the Food Strategy and covers health, social, primary industries, environment, education, and trade, and ensures all cross-government policy considers the impact on food systems.

Recommendation 3: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **centre health and health equity within food system decision-making**, by:

- a) centring health and health equity within the new food strategy,
- b) ensuring that Aotearoa New Zealand's Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industries have equal input into the Joint Food System with Australia,
- c) ensuring Indigenous participation in Joint Food System decision making; and
- d) making changes to the Food Act to ensure that all risks to public health from the food system are recognised and acted on.

### ***Enable local communities***

Recommendation 4: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government, to **resource and enable community leadership** for local food systems including,

- a) supporting **community participation** in local decision making, and local and national food system planning,
- b) supporting **local government to develop and implement local and regional food strategies** in partnership with local communities and local public health services/local health authorities, and
- c) supporting and learning from **programmes** which are working to improve local food environments.

Recommendation 5: That the Minister of Health and colleagues in Government work with communities and hapū and iwi **to support the growth and revitalisation of Indigenous Māori food systems** and traditional kai knowledge and practices, including,

- a) recognition of **iwi boundaries and cultural needs** and practices within those boundaries,
- b) **protection and replenishment of mahinga kai** including restoring waterways and Vegetation or fauna and flora, and
- c) resourcing **iwi Māori partnership boards** to monitor and report on the physical environment for food growing and gathering.

### ***Use legislation, policy and regulation levers to create and foster healthy food environments***

Recommendation 6: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government and industry to **improve the nutritional content of food via a comprehensive reformulation programme**, which will include compositional limits and mandatory labelling (in cooperation with Australia under the Joint Food System), and fiscal levers to drive reformulation of processed foods.

Recommendation 7: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **implement regulatory measures which aim to provide a healthy food environment for children and young people**, including:

- a) legislative **restrictions on the marketing, advertising and sponsorship of unhealthy food** and drinks which children and young people are exposed to, including digital content,
- b) **healthy food and drink policies** in schools and other child focussed settings, and
- c) using **fiscal measures** to support children's healthy food consumption, for example a levy on sugar sweetened beverages.

Recommendation 8: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **review and amend the Local Government Act** to strengthen the ability of local government to take action to improve local food environments, including in protecting areas significant for food production and preventing food deserts.

### ***Eliminate food insecurity for all New Zealanders***

Recommendation 9: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **support a more resilient and sustainable approach to ensuring food security** for all New Zealanders, including:

- a) sustained funding of **government led initiatives** such as MSD's Food Secure Communities work programme,
- b) resourcing community organisations and local authorities to build **resilient, mana-enhancing approaches** such as food co-operatives, mara kai and community gardens, and
- c) **building on lessons** from events such as COVID-19 and Cyclone Gabrielle to build resilient food systems and networks.

Recommendation 10: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **support food security and nutrition in pregnancy, breastfeeding and childhood** through targeted interventions including:

- a) providing **income support** from pregnancy through first 1000 days,
- b) extended **parental leave** policies,
- c) working with existing providers to increase the provision of **support for breastfeeding, and**
- d) expanding **food in schools programmes** (e.g. Ka Ora Ka Ako) to ensure that all children experiencing food insecurity have access to nutritious food in education settings.

Recommendation 11: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **strengthen actions to tackle poverty** and reduce cost-of-living and food affordability pressures, including:

- a) implementing fiscal measures to reduce the cost of fruit and vegetables and other core foods or increase income available for healthy food, and
- b) working with the Grocery Commissioner to ensure actions to diversify the food supply result in improvements in food security.

### ***Embed a programme of data collection, research, monitoring and surveillance within our food system***

Recommendation 12: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **fund implementation of regular national nutrition surveys** to monitor dietary intake and identify priorities for nutrition-related policy.

Recommendation 13: That the Minister of Health work with colleagues in Government to **develop and implement a national monitoring framework** to provide resources, data and tools assess the impacts of local and national food system interventions and policies on health and wellbeing, as part of a National Food Strategy.

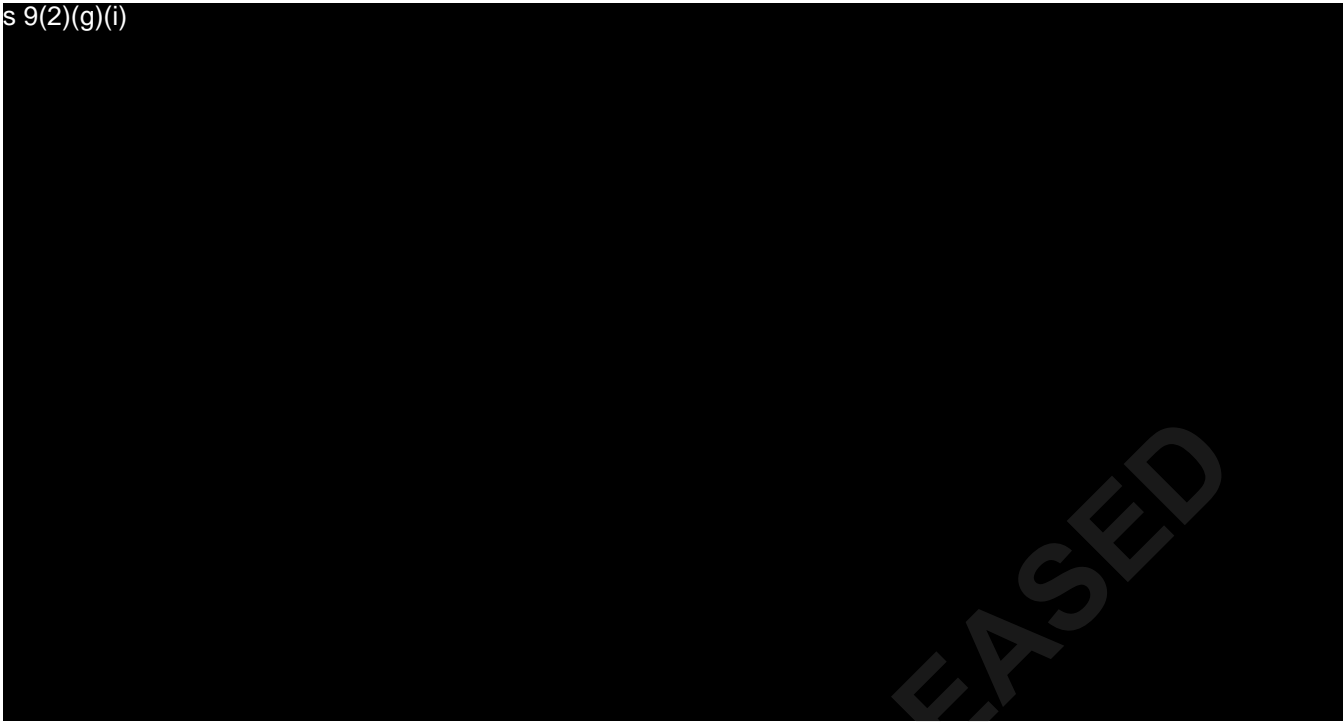
### Appendix 3 – Proposed reactive talking points

The following lines reflect information sent by officials to your office via email on 22 April 2024.

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