

Briefing for decision

Government response to the petition of Stop Institutional Racism on re-establishing the Māori Health Authority

Date due to MO: 11 February 2025 **Action required by:** 17 February 2025

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Reference:** H2024058405

To: Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health

Consulted: Health New Zealand:

Proactive release: This title is proposed by the Ministry of Health for proactive release:

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
John Whaanga	Deputy Director-General, Māori Health	s 9(2)(a)
Cheree Shortland-Nuku	Group Manager, Māori Health Strategy Policy and Insights	s 9(2)(a)

Minister's office to complete:

- Approved Decline Overtaken by events
 Needs change Seen
 See Minister's Notes Withdrawn

Comment:

Briefing for decision

Government response to the petition of Stop Institutional Racism on re-establishing the Māori Health Authority

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Date:** 11 February 2025

To: Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health

Background

1. On 20 August 2024, a petition by the organisation Stop Institutional Racism calling for the re-establishment of the Māori Health Authority was presented to the House.
2. On 5 December 2024, the Petitions Committee referred the petition to the Minister of Health for a response. The Petitions Committee did not write a report or make any recommendations regarding the petition.

Officials have drafted a response to the petition for your approval

3. The petition requests "that the House of Representatives urge the Government to re-establish Te Aka Whai Ora (the Māori Health Authority), as a Māori-led structure independent from Te Whatu Ora with the resources to commission hauora services that work for Māori and advocate for Māori health; and note that 18,258 people have signed a similar online petition."
4. We have drafted a Ministerial response to the petition. The response acknowledges the poor health outcomes that Māori experience and the work that is still needed to improve the health system for Māori. It notes that the disestablishment of the Māori Health Authority was set out in the manifesto of each coalition party prior to the 2023 election and was part of the Government's first 100-day plan. It also notes that when the Government disestablished the Māori Health Authority, it recognised the importance of maintaining health system mechanisms that play a role in improving Māori health outcomes.
5. While the disestablishment of the Māori Health Authority brought a particular approach to Māori health to an end, the current legislative and policy settings still provide for the continuation of key elements that are mentioned in the petition.
6. We have already sought feedback from Health NZ on the draft response given their responsibility for the delivery of health services that contribute to improving Māori health outcomes.
7. A draft Cabinet paper and draft response to the petition are attached for your review and approval.

Next steps

8. The response to the petition is on track to be considered by the Cabinet Legislation Committee on 13 March 2025, ahead of going to Cabinet on 17 March 2025. Following Cabinet approval, the response must be presented to the House by 25 March 2025.
9. To meet these timeframes, it is expected that ministerial consultation on the draft Cabinet paper and draft petition response paper will need to occur from 19 February to 5 March 2025.
10. We can provide your office with any further materials and/or information as required to support this process, including any changes you may wish to make to the Cabinet paper and petition response.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| a) Note that the Petitions Committee referred the petition to re-establish the Māori Health Authority directly to the Minister of Health for response. | Yes/No |
| b) Note that the Minister of Health must present the Government response to the petition to the House by Tuesday 25 March 2025. | Yes/No |
| c) Note we have consulted with Health New Zealand on the draft response given its responsibility for the delivery of health services and functions that help improve Māori health outcomes. | Yes/No |
| d) Approve the draft Cabinet paper and draft Government response paper. | Yes/No |



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

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister of Health
 Date:

ENDS.

The final Cabinet paper is published here:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/information-releases>

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Aide-Mémoire

Cabinet Legislation Committee meeting regarding the Ministerial response to the petition of Stop Institutional Racism on re-establishing the Māori Health Authority

Date due to MO:	11 March 2025	Date of Meeting:	13 March 2025
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Reference:	H2025062640
To:	Hon Chris Penk, Minister for Building and Construction		
Consulted:	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Proactive release:	This title is proposed by the Ministry of Health for proactive release: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
John Whaanga	Deputy Director-General, Māori Health	s 9(2)(a)
Cheree Shortland-Nuku	Group Manager, Māori Health Strategy Policy and Insights, Māori Health	s 9(2)(a)

Aide-Mémoire

Cabinet Legislation Committee meeting regarding the Ministerial response to the petition of Stop Institutional Racism on re-establishing the Māori Health Authority

Date due:	11 March 2025		
To:	Hon Chris Penk, Minister for Building and Construction		
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Reference:	H2025062640

About the meeting

Purpose of Meeting To seek the Cabinet Legislation Committee's agreement to the Ministerial response to the petition by Stop Institutional Racism that requests the re-establishment of the Māori Health Authority.

Details of Meeting

Date: 13 March 2025
Time: 9:30am – 10:00am
Venue: 8.5 Cabinet Committee Room

Attendees Hon Chris Bishop (Committee Chair), Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Rt Hon Winston Peters, Hon David Seymour, Hon Brooke van Velden, Hon Shane Jones, Hon Paul Goldsmith, Hon Louise Upston (Deputy Chair), Hon Judith Collins KC, Hon Dr Shane Reti, Hon Tama Potaka, Hon Nicole McKee, Hon Casey Costello, Hon Simon Watts, Hon James Meager, Hon Scott Simpson, Jamie Arbuckle, Todd Stephenson.

Ministry representatives John Whaanga, Deputy Director-General, Maori Health

Cabinet Committee: Cabinet Legislation Committee (LEG)

Background and context

1. A petition from Stop Institutional Racism requesting the re-establishment of the Māori Health Authority was presented to the House on 20 August 2024.
2. On 5 December 2024, the Petitions Committee referred the petition directly to the Minister of Health for a response.
3. The Minister of Health's response to the petition must be approved by Cabinet and presented to the House.
4. You have agreed to present the Cabinet paper and petition response to the Cabinet Legislation Committee on behalf of the Minister of Health.

5. This aide-mémoire provides you with talking points and questions and answers (attached as **Appendix 1**) for presenting the petition response at the Cabinet Legislation Committee meeting on 13 March 2025.
6. Following Cabinet agreement, the response to the petition must be presented to the House by 25 March 2025.



John Whaanga
Deputy Director-General
Māori Health Directorate

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Appendix 1: Talking points and questions and answers

s 9(2)(g)(i)

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s 9(2)(g)(i)



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Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report of the Cabinet Legislation Committee: Period Ended 14 March 2025

On 17 March 2025, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Legislation Committee for the period ended 14 March 2025:

Out of scope

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LEG-25-MIN-0033

**Ministerial Response to the Petition of Stop
Institutional Racism**
Portfolio: Health

CONFIRMED

Out of scope

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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Cabinet Legislation Committee

Minute of Decision

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Ministerial Response to the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism

Portfolio **Health**

On 13 March 2025, the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

- 1 **noted** that on 5 December 2024, the Petitions Committee referred the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism to a Minister for response;
- 2 **noted** the Petitioner's request, that the Government re-establish the Māori Health Authority as a standalone entity independent of Health New Zealand, that the re-established standalone entity has the resources to commission health services, and that the re-established standalone entity has an advocacy function;
- 3 **noted** the Government's priority in the Health portfolio is to ensure access to timely, quality healthcare for all New Zealanders, including Māori;
- 4 **noted** the response of the Minister of Health and in particular their advice about the health system mechanisms that remain in place to support improved health outcomes;
- 5 **approved** the Ministerial response to the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism, attached to the paper under LEG-25-SUB-0033;
- 6 **noted** that the Ministerial response must be presented to the House by 25 March 2025;
- 7 **invited** the Minister of Health to present the Ministerial response to the House in accordance with Standing Order 380;
- 8 **invited** the Minister of Health to write to the Petitioner enclosing a copy of the Ministerial response to the Petition, after the response has been presented to the House.

Tom Kelly
Committee Secretary

Attendance (see over)

Present:

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Louise Upston (Chair)
Hon Brooke van Velden
Hon Judith Collins KC
Hon Simon Watts
Hon Casey Costello
Hon Chris Penk
Hon Penny Simmonds
Stuart Smith, MP
Jamie Arbuckle, MP
Tod Stephenson, MP

Officials present from:

Officials Committee for LEG

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In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Health
Cabinet Legislation Committee

Ministerial Response to the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism on Re-establishing the Māori Health Authority

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks approval of the Minister of Health's response to the Petitions Committee's referral of the petition by Stop Institutional Racism.

Background

- 2 The petition of Stop Institutional Racism was presented to the House on 20 August 2024.
- 3 The petition requests that the House of Representatives urge the Government to re-establish the Māori Health Authority as a standalone entity independent of Health New Zealand; that the re-established standalone entity has the resources to commission health services; and that the re-established standalone entity has an advocacy function.

Comment on the petition's request and Ministerial response

- 4 On 5 December 2024 the Petitions Committee referred the Petition to the Minister of Health for response.
- 5 The response (attached as Appendix 1):
 - 5.1 reiterates the Government's priority in the Health portfolio is to ensure access to timely, quality healthcare for all New Zealanders, including Māori.
 - 5.2 notes that when the Government disestablished the Māori Health Authority, it recognised the importance of retaining health system mechanisms that support improved health outcomes for Māori. These mechanisms include the Hauora Māori Advisory Committee (HMAC) and funding appropriated to the health of Māori being retained through the transfer to Health New Zealand.
 - 5.3 explains that HMAC plays an important role with regard to the three key elements highlighted in the Petition by providing independent advice to the Minister of Health on the health of Māori and monitoring the performance of the health system for Māori at system level.

Timing of the response

- 6 The Ministerial response must be presented to the House by 25 March 2025, in accordance with Standing Order 380.

Consultation

7 This paper was prepared by the Ministry of Health. Health New Zealand has been consulted and the feedback was considered.

Financial implications

8 There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

Publicity

9 No specific announcements related to this paper are planned.

Proactive Release

10 This paper will be published on the Ministry of Health website in accordance with the proactive release guidelines.

Recommendations

The Minister of Health recommends that the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

- 1 **note** that on 5 December 2024 the Petitions Committee referred the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism to a Minister for response;
- 2 **note** the Petitioner's request, that the Government re-establish the Māori Health Authority as a standalone entity independent of Health New Zealand; that the re-established standalone entity has the resources to commission health services; and that the re-established standalone entity has an advocacy function;
- 3 **note** the Government's priority in the Health portfolio is to ensure access to timely, quality healthcare for all New Zealanders, including Māori.
- 4 **note** the response of the Minister of Health and in particular their advice about the health system mechanisms that remain in place to support improved health outcomes.
- 5 **approve** the Ministerial response (Appendix 1) to the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism;
- 6 **note** that the Ministerial response must be presented to the House by 25 March 2025;
- 7 **invite** the Minister of Health to present the Ministerial response to the House in accordance with Standing Order 380;
- 8 **invite** the Minister of Health to write to the Petitioner enclosing a copy of the Ministerial response to the Petition, after the response has been presented to the House.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Simeon Brown

Minister of Health

Appendix 1:

**Ministerial Response to the referral of the Petition of Stop
Institutional Racism on Re-establishing the Māori Health Authority**

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**Ministerial Response to
the referral of the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism
on
Re-establishing the Māori Health Authority**

Presented to the House of Representatives

In accordance with Standing Order 380

Minister of Health's response to the referral of the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism on re-establishing the Māori Health Authority

Introduction

- 1 I have received the Petition Committee's referral of the Petition of Stop Institutional Racism on re-establishing the Māori Health Authority.
- 2 I have considered the Petition, which requests that the Government re-establish the Māori Health Authority as a standalone entity independent of Health New Zealand; that the re-established standalone entity has the resources to commission health services; and that the re-established standalone entity has an advocacy function.
- 3 I have decided that the Government will decline the Petitioner's request to re-establish the Māori Health Authority. The Government's priority in the Health portfolio is to ensure access to timely, quality healthcare for all New Zealanders, including Māori.
- 4 My response to the referral of the Petition is in accordance with Standing Order 380.
- 5 The Petition was presented to the House on 20 August 2024 and referred to the Petitions Committee. On 5 December 2024 the Petitions Committee agreed to refer the Petition to a Minister for response and it was referred to the Minister of Health.

Ministerial response

- 6 The Petition requests three key elements.
 - That the Māori Health Authority be re-established as a standalone entity independent of Health NZ.
 - That the re-established standalone entity has the resources to commission health services.
 - That the re-established standalone entity has an advocacy function.
- 7 The Government is committed to delivering access to timely, quality healthcare for all New Zealanders, including Māori. While health outcomes have improved in recent decades, some communities continue to experience higher health needs. The focus of the Government remains on improving healthcare access, ensuring that the healthcare system delivers better outcomes for all patients. This requires a particular focus on delivering services in communities where there is greater need.
- 8 The disestablishment of the Māori Health Authority was set out in the manifesto of each coalition party prior to the 2023 election and was part of the Government's first 100-day plan. When the Government disestablished the Māori Health Authority it recognised the importance of retaining health system mechanisms that support improved health outcomes. These include:
 - the Hauora Māori Advisory Committee (HMAC) with updated roles and responsibilities

- ensuring that funding that was appropriated for Māori health through the Māori Health Authority remained with Māori health once it was transferred to Health New Zealand
- the health sector principles, which are aimed at making improvements to the health sector and improving health outcomes for all patients, including Māori
- expectations set through the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027 around improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders.

HMAC advocate for the health of Māori and allow for Māori representation independent of mainstream health structures

- 9 HMAC allows for independent Māori representation at the highest level of decision-making by advising the Minister of Health directly on matters relating to the health of Māori. HMAC's role was refocused from advising on Māori Health Authority performance to advising on the health of Māori and assisting with monitoring health outcomes for Māori and system performance.
- 10 The function of HMAC provides the ability to advise and guide the Minister and Health New Zealand respectively with regard to the health of Māori.

Conclusion

The Government is focused on delivering access to timely, quality healthcare for all New Zealanders. While progress has been made, there is still work to do to improve how the system functions to achieve better health outcomes, particularly in communities where there is greater need. Following the disestablishment of the Māori Health Authority, previously allocated funding was retained, along with HMAC, which continues to play an important role in the health system. At a system level, HMAC provides independent advice to the Minister and monitors the performance of the health system to ensure it meets the needs of Māori alongside all New Zealanders.