



17 April 2025

Mr Hayden Wano
Chair
Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission | Te Hiringa Mahara
Hayden.Wano@mhwc.govt.nz

Dear Hayden

As you are aware, this Government is committed to improving mental health and addiction outcomes by providing New Zealanders with timely access to high-quality services, delivered by a financially sustainable health system.

As Minister for Mental Health, and your responsible Minister, this letter sets out my expectations for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission | Te Hiringa Mahara (the Commission) for 2025/26. This letter should be read in conjunction with my previous Letter of Expectations (LoE) and the enduring letter of expectations for statutory Crown entities.

I want to thank you for your commitment over the past year to deliver the measures as outlined in your 2024/25 Statement of Performance Expectations. However, there is more work to do. The Commission has a unique statutory cross-government role, with a mandate to monitor contributions to mental health and wellbeing across sectors and agencies, beyond those entities of the health sector. I expect to see a stronger cross-government focus by the Commission in the coming year and I have an expectation that the Commission clearly articulates this in its priority areas of focus.

The Commission has now been operating for over four years. In early 2026, I will be commencing a review of the operations and effectiveness of the Commission led by my officials at the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), as required under your enabling legislation. As a mature entity, I expect measures and outputs to reflect more nuanced analysis and to articulate the expected value add of the Commission's work. Therefore, I would like to see a stronger focus in areas where you can provide high quality deliverables with the greatest impact.

Maintaining delivery on your statutory obligations and objectives in an effective, efficient and fiscally responsible manner will be critical in an environment where health resources are finite, and taxpayers and consumers of health services have high expectations of performance. This elevates the importance of avoiding duplication and ensuring all activities are adding to our collective understanding of system performance.

I have set clear expectations for the Ministry and Health New Zealand (Health NZ) regarding priorities for the mental health and addiction system and service monitoring capturing the

targets, balancing measures and a range of other mental health and addiction service metrics. I ask the Commission to focus its monitoring activities on complementary areas, including deeper analysis of systemic issues or challenges that require monitoring beyond existing service metrics and datasets. I also suggest the Commission consider exploring areas such as:

- productivity and value for money of current health and/or cross-government investment in mental health and addiction outcomes and initiatives
- capturing deeper information than is currently available about the experience of people with lived experience in the mental health and addiction system
- analysis of current resourcing against population needs, to inform future areas of focus at a system level
- deeper analysis of the interface between cross-sector systems and other agencies' contributions to/impacts on mental health, addiction and wellbeing.

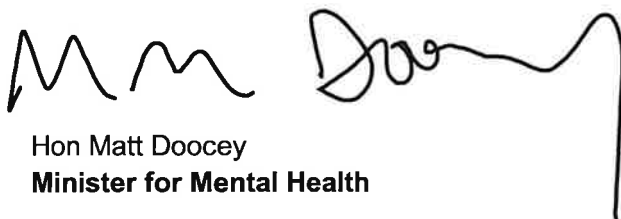
I encourage the Commission to engage with the Ministry and Health NZ in planning its work programme and areas of focus to identify opportunities where the Commission's work or analysis could contribute to insights to support the implementation of Government priorities and targets. This will include the Commission's involvement in the development of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Specifically, I also expect the Commission to include a focus on suicide prevention and delivery of the Government's related 2025-2029 Action Plan within its monitoring role, and that this be reflected in your upcoming set of accountability documents.

You will be aware of work underway to develop new mental health legislation and the need to prepare the mental health and addiction system for shifts in practice, as well as to prepare the wider public for shifts in attitudes. I see a role for the Commission to provide leadership in supporting positive discourse about mental health and wellbeing in the public domain, in particular the Commission is well placed to lead a national conversation about risk and mental health.

I ask you to provide a draft of your Statement of Intent 2025-2029 and Statement of Performance Expectations for 2025/26 to your contact at the Ministry by 30 April 2025.

I look forward to working with you over the coming year.

Yours sincerely



Hon Matt Doocey
Minister for Mental Health

cc Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health
Audrey Sonerson, Director-General of Health, Ministry of Health
Karen Orsborn, Chief Executive, Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission