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s9(2)(a)

Ref: H2025062367

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 27 February 2025 for information regarding the different roles and responsibilities between the Ministry and Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ).

As you outlined in previous correspondence, your enquiry is not in the form of a traditional Official Information Act request in that it sets out a series of open questions in place of seeking information. The Ministry is therefore providing a direct reply to your questions, including links to relevant documents held by the Ministry which provide further information where relevant.

- *From the Ministry's perspective, where does its responsibility for ensuring the health of New Zealanders end, and where does Te Whatu Ora's responsibility begin?*
- *What obligations does the Ministry consider its own?*
- *What obligations does the Ministry attribute to Te Whatu Ora?*

Overarching responsibilities related to the provision and delivery of the publicly funded health system are laid out within our legislative framework, starting with the Pae Ora Healthy Futures Act (the Act), which can be found here:

legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2022/0030/latest/whole.html#LMS575628

Section 10 outlines the Minister of Health's roles under the Act, which the Ministry supports the Minister to discharge. Sections 13 and 14 of the Act outline Health NZ's specific objectives and functions respectively.

The Ministry is the chief steward of health and the health system, and the lead advisor to Government on health. As part of this stewardship role, we undertake several key functions, including supporting Ministers to set the direction, policy, regulatory framework and investment for health, and monitoring outcomes, and system and organisational performance.

The Ministry's strategic intentions 2024-2028 document outlines further detail related to our specific functions, which can be found here: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2024-11/Strategic%20Intentions%202024-2028%20online%20version-4nov24.pdf. Please refer to pages 1-2 for an overview, and pages 9-14 for further detail on how we deliver on key functions.

As the entity responsible for the design, arrangement and delivery of public health services, Health NZ has responsibility for funding and delivering health services from the previous 20 district health boards and some operational functions previously undertaken by the Ministry. To achieve these functions, Health NZ plans, commissions, and provides most publicly funded health services through a nationally coordinated and regionally delivered health system. Health NZ regions also oversee commissioning of primary and community services and manage the delivery of hospital and specialist services networks.

- *Are there any responsibilities the Ministry sees as shared or overlapping between the two?*

While the Ministry and Health NZ work collaboratively, both have different roles. As the chief steward and monitor of the health system, the Ministry provides advice on the system settings needed to ensure New Zealanders have timely access to quality health care when and when they need it. Health NZ is responsible for delivering services against those settings.

As your initial request enquired about how these roles worked with respect to the health workforce, we have included some further information on this. In the context of health workforce settings, the Ministry has a role to support Ministers to set direction, identify and make changes to overarching policy settings, and monitor the state of the workforce. Under the Act, Health NZ has specific functions to undertake workforce planning and collaborate with relevant entities to improve the capability and capacity of the health workforce. Further statutory requirements related to the health workforce are outlined within the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act 2003, which can be found here: www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0048/latest/whole.html#DLM203312

The Ministry and Health NZ frequently collaborate on matters related on workforce related policy settings, and both have a monitoring role around the state of the health workforce (though Health NZ's role is more operational by nature).

There are also other actors across the system that play a significant role in the health workforce ecosystem, including responsible authorities that regulate relevant professions, education providers and colleges that support the education and training of health professionals in New Zealand.

Workforce is one of five priorities outlined within the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027 (GPS) and outlines the government's objectives and expectations to improve the health workforce over this period. Health NZ must give effect to the GPS and is responsible for delivering on workforce expectations laid out in the GPS, as well as any other priorities the Minister of Health has for the health workforce. The GPS can be found here: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2024-06/government-policy-statement-on-health-2024-2027-v4.pdf

- *What level of accountability does the Ministry attribute to Te Whatu Ora's CEO?*
- *If available, I would appreciate any relevant Ministry-held documents that outline these responsibilities and accountabilities.*
- *In the Ministry's view, does the Chief Executive of Te Whatu Ora hold executive responsibility for operational performance, health outcomes, and statutory obligations previously held by District Health Boards?*

Under the Act, Health NZ is a Crown agent currently governed by a commissioner who reports to the Minister of Health. The Commissioner has all the functions, duties, powers, and protections of the Board. These include driving entity performance, being the primary monitor of entity performance, and being accountable to the Minister of Health for the entity's performance. The Chief Executive of Health NZ does not have explicit statutory responsibilities under the Act, instead being delegated responsibilities by the Board to ensure the day to day running of Health NZ is meeting the statutory objectives and functions required of the entity.

If you have further questions or require further clarification about your questions, we are happy to set up a conversation to discuss these with you directly.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Caleb Johnstone', written in a cursive style.

Caleb Johnstone
**Group Manager, Strategy
Strategy, Policy & Legislation**