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22 May 2025

s9(2)(a)

Ref: H2025066270

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), which was partially transferred to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) from the Office of the Minister of Health, Hon Simeon Brown, on 2 May 2025. Each part of your request has been responded to in turn:

2. Information on existing or proposed multi-agency policies, strategies, or initiatives aimed at addressing declining fertility rates, promoting sustainable population growth, and supporting young families holistically across sectors. Additionally, please include any policy evaluations, reports, or reviews conducted on their effectiveness. (Relevant agencies: Health, Social Development, Education, Immigration, Housing, Economic Development.)

The Ministry is not aware of, nor undertaking any work directed at addressing declining fertility rates or promoting population growth. Information regarding support for young families can be found in the Child and Youth Strategy 2024-27 (the Strategy), which can be found here:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/child-wellbeing-and-poverty-reduction/child-youth-strategy/index.html

The Strategy responds to the requirements in the Children's Act 2014 to improve outcomes for children. It provides a snapshot of actions the Government is taking, areas in which further work will be undertaken, and the measures that will be used to demonstrate progress. This Strategy refreshes the previous Strategy (published in 2019) and will be reviewed in 2027. It identifies three priorities to drive cross-government work, inform investment decisions, and ensure progress is measured. These priorities include supporting children and their families in the first 2,000 days, reducing child material hardship and preventing harm against children. The Ministry focuses on supporting children and their families in the first 2,000 days.

Further information can be found on the Ministry of Social Development's website, including previous annual reports at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/child-wellbeing-and-

[poverty-reduction/index.html](#). For further information you may wish to contact the Ministry of Social Development at: oiia_requests@msd.govt.nz

3. Details on current inter-agency efforts and initiatives targeted at improving women's health, reproductive education, maternity care, and family planning. Please include ongoing or planned initiatives, pilots, or proposals related to these areas. (Primarily addressed by Health, with contributions from Education and Social Development.)

The Ministry has supported the Government to develop the Women's Health Strategy to set the direction for improving the health and wellbeing of women between 2023 to 2033. The strategy is available online at: www.health.govt.nz/strategies-initiatives/health-strategies/womens-health-strategy.

The Ministry provided Hon Casey Costello, Associate Minister of Health with responsibility for women's health, a briefing on current work undertaken by the Ministry to support women's health. This has been proactively released and is publicly available at: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2024-10/H2024039390%20AM%20-%20Womens%20health%20-%20key%20initiatives%20that%20support%20womens%20health.pdf

A further document, titled "Aide-Memoire H2025059314 - Meeting with the Minister for Women to discuss women's health," reference number H2025059314, was provided to the Minister to give an update on these work programmes. This will soon be proactively released to the Ministry's website here: www.health.govt.nz/publications.

For further information, you may wish to contact Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora at: hnzoia@health.govt.nz

4. Comprehensive details of programs and policies across Health, Education, Corrections, Social Development, Transport, Housing, and Digital Infrastructure providing support to parents, including mental health services, parental leave policies, childcare, education resources, corrections rehabilitation programs, transport accessibility, social assistance, and the use of technology to improve service delivery. (Relevant agencies: Health, Education, Corrections, Social Development, Transport, Housing, Economic Development.)

The Ministry is unable to advise of a single agency to transfer your request, as the question is not specific enough to consider an appropriate agency. The parts of the question that would be relevant to health are the parenting programmes and mental health services, which are services provided by Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora.

The Ministry queried a transfer of this part of your request to Health New Zealand; however, they advised they have nothing in scope of your request as it is currently framed. Health New Zealand would be open to working with a more specific request. You may wish to contact Health New Zealand at: hnzoia@health.govt.nz

The Ministry notes that children under 14 receive free GP visits, after hours care and prescriptions: www.govt.nz/browse/health/free-health-services-for-children/free-health-checks-for-children-under-14/

6. Information on policies addressing the economic and workforce implications of declining population, including workforce shortages, immigration strategies, economic development plans, housing availability, and related digital infrastructure improvements.

(Relevant agencies: Immigration, Social Development, Housing, Economic Development, Digital Infrastructure.)

This part of your request has been transferred to the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) in accordance with section 14(b)(ii) of the Act. You will receive a response from MBIE in due course: oiia@mbie.govt.nz

7. A detailed summary of your responsibilities, priorities, and initiatives as Minister of Health in collaborating with other ministers and departments (Education, Corrections, Social Development, Transport, Housing, Immigration, Economic Development, Digital Infrastructure, etc.) to respond effectively to population decline. Please include formal or informal coordination mechanisms between agencies such as working groups, interdepartmental meetings, or policy forums.

From 2014 to 2024, the population living in New Zealand grew by 18%, or around 817,000 people. In Budget 2024, the Vote Health package provided \$16.68 billion in new funding over three Budgets to address cost pressures faced by Health New Zealand, including from demographic changes. This allows health services to keep pace with population growth, demographic aging and increasing costs pressures to deliver services.

One of the key demographic changes within the health portfolio is population ageing. The Healthy Ageing Strategy, led by the Minister for Seniors, involves a range of ministerial and cross agency engagement to support healthy ageing. This was first published in 2016, with an update provided by Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora. These are available online at: www.health.govt.nz/publications/healthy-ageing-strategy and www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/for-health-professionals/clinical-guidance/specific-life-stage-health-information/health-of-older-people/healthy-ageing-strategy-update

Please also refer to the Child and Youth Strategy 2024–27, as set out in response to question 2 of your request.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



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