

Terms of Reference - Health Workforce Committee

The Health Workforce Committee (the Committee) is a ministerial committee established by the Minister of Health (the Minister) under section 87 of the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 (the Healthy Futures Act).

Purpose

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Minister on health workforce priorities to ensure that New Zealand has a health workforce that is able to meet the needs of individuals, whānau, and communities now and in the future.

Background

The Committee was initially established as the Health Workforce Advisory Committee in 2001.

It was informally paused during the health system reform transition, as responsibilities for workforce strategic oversight, development and planning were divided across agencies.

In 2024, the Minister re-established the Health Workforce Advisory Committee as the Health Workforce and System Efficiencies Committee under section 87 subpart 5 of the Healthy Futures Act. In 2025, the Minister renamed the Committee as the Health Workforce Committee.

Under section 87 of the Healthy Future Act, the Minister may appoint, terminate, determine a function, and provide a written direction as to the procedure of the Committee.

Role

The Committee's role is to provide independent advice to the Minister on matters relating to the health workforce priorities, current and emerging risks and issues, and to support the strategic and long-term vision of the health workforce.

The Committee will have a role in identifying and advising on opportunities to improve efficiencies across the health workforce and monitor the progress of workforce initiatives.

As a part of the Committee's advisory role, it will:

1. Provide strategic leadership and advice:

- a) Be the Minister's primary external advisor on health workforce. Ensure system settings and key partners are aligned to achieve workforce priorities and efficiencies.
- b) Advise on approaches to assure delivery of workforce priorities and manage strategic workforce challenges across settings including education and training.

- c) Identify health system efficiencies, especially in areas that support current health workforce priorities and to support the Government's health targets.

2. Monitor system performance, provide assurance and reporting

- a) Monitor the progress of health workforce initiatives led by Health NZ.
- b) Provide insights to the Minister on progress against deliverables related to the health workforce. This includes for actions within the Government Policy Statement and the Health Workforce Plan.

3. Work with key partners

- a) Work with the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) in alignment with the longer-term, system-level direction needed for the health workforce.
- b) Support the Ministry with their stewardship of the workforce, specifically the Ministry's workforce monitoring capability and capacity, and identifying opportunities to manage workforce challenges.
- c) Support the role of Health NZ in workforce planning and development in the short- to medium-term.

4. Ensure a quality workforce

- a) Ensure New Zealand's workforce has the skills and capabilities to provide timely quality healthcare for our population.
- b) Provide insights on how to grow a quality health workforce that is available and accessible to communities, and responsive to the wide range of health needs.

Accountability and reporting

The Committee:

- a) Will provide reporting directly to the Minister and is accountable for the quality and timeliness of its advice.
- b) Can report directly to the Minister and the Ministry on all matters within its remit at any time as it may deem necessary.
- c) May request advice and information from all departments of the agencies, the Ministry and the Minister's office, including other Government entities.

Before providing advice to the Minister, the Committee must consult with the entities involved in the provision of services, and any other persons it considers appropriate. All advice to the Minister must be provided to the Ministry for their information.

All official and unofficial queries about the Committee, its role, advice, etc. from the agencies, Ministry, and other Government entities, including the media and New Zealand public will need to be directed to the Chair of the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee will ensure they discuss their proposed response with the Ministry and the Minister before it is provided to the requestor or made public.

Where relevant, a copy of the embargoed response will also be provided to the agencies by the Chair, post approval from the Minister.

The Ministry will work with the Committee to assist it in the production of its annual report to the Minister. The Ministry, under section 88(5)(b), Subpart 5 of the Healthy Futures Act, is responsible for notifying the Minister when any ministerial committee has not reported to them in the year to which the report relates.

Membership

Each member of the Committee is appointed on any terms and conditions (including terms and conditions as to remuneration and travelling allowances and expenses) that the Minister determines by written notice to the member.

Collectively, the Committee will have the following expertise and attributes:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the obligations of the Crown under various statutes
2. Knowledge and understanding of the role of the Ministry, and health and disability sector, in achieving equity and improving health outcomes
3. Knowledge and understanding of undergraduate, postgraduate, clinical, and vocational educational and training programmes for the health and disability sector in New Zealand and overseas
4. Knowledge of New Zealand's current health and disability services and service delivery needs to meet future demands
5. An ability to provide solutions that are not constrained by traditional health and disability sector professional boundaries or current service delivery models

The Committee will be reflective, but not necessarily representative, of the health workforce; members will apply varying health workforce lenses (eg, regulated and unregulated) to workforce matters.

Members are generally appointed for a term of three years, or any shorter term of appointment determined by the Minister.

A member continues in office despite the expiry of their term of office until:

- a) the member is reappointed; or
- b) the member's successor is appointed; or
- c) the Minister informs the member by written notice that the member is not to be reappointed and no successor is to be appointed at that time."

Members may be reappointed to the Committee but only after consideration of factors, such as the Committee's programme of work, and the mix of skills and experiences required on the Committee.

The Committee will comprise up to nine members including the Chair, the Deputy Chair (if a Deputy Chair is required and appointed).

Under section 87(1) Subpart 5 of the Healthy Futures Act, the Minister, may by written notice, appoint any person to be a member or Chair of the Committee and terminate the Committee or the appointment of a member or Chair of the Committee.

Any member of the Committee may resign at any time by advising the Minister and the Chair in writing. The Chair may resign at any time by written notice to the Minister.

The Committee may draw on external expertise as required and may appoint expert advisors to assist in making deliberations after first discussing financial implications with the Director-General of Health. These expert advisors are not Committee members and have no voting rights.

The Director-General of Health or a nominated person from the Ministry shall have a standing invitation to attend all Committee meetings and be an active participant by contributing to discussions and suggestions. The representative from the Ministry is an active participant, and not an official member of the Committee, and as such, will have no voting rights.

Duties

Through letters of appointment, members of the Committee will be advised of the term of their appointment and will be given a copy of the terms of reference.

Members of the Committee are expected to act in good faith and integrity when performing their duties on behalf of the Committee.

Members are not to disclose any confidential information gained from being a member of the Committee, nor to use the information for other purposes outside of the Committee.

The Committee will be expected to meet at least quarterly, but may meet more frequently as required for the work programme. All members are expected to attend meetings and undertake Committee activities as independent persons responsible to the Committee. Members are

appointed for their knowledge and expertise, not as representatives of professional organisations or groups.

Committee members would be expected to meet outside of formally scheduled Committee meetings, upon the Minister's request for any advice with a level of urgency.

Members are appointed to advance the health and disability sector, and not the interests of other groups with which they may be affiliated.

The Committee should not assume that a particular group's interests have been considered because a member is associated with a particular group.

Conduct and Behaviour

During Committee meetings and in official and non-official communications pertaining to the Committee, members must conduct themselves in a respectful manner with consideration of each other's perspectives and ethical values.

Committee members are expected to perform their duties in an objective and lawful manner. They must remain impartial, providing robust and unbiased advice for the improvement of the health and disability sector.

Members are responsible for declaring any real or potential conflict of interest to the Chair, as and when conflicts arise. Simply declaring a conflict of interest in itself does not amount to the effective and appropriate management of that conflict. Members and the Chair should discuss management plans for any conflict, and these should be held on a register maintained by the Secretariat.

Secretariat Services

The Ministry will provide secretariat services and administrative support to the Committee. This will include helping with the preparation of written materials on behalf of the Committee.

Liability

Members of the Committee are not liable to the Ministry or agencies for any act (or failure to act) in their capacity as a member of the Committee, if they have acted in good faith, and with reasonable care, in pursuance of the role specified for the Committee in accordance with these terms of reference.

Remuneration

The fee payable to members, Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee is set out in individual letters of appointment, and are set in line with Cabinet Office Circular CO (22) 2: *Revised Fees framework for members appointed to bodies in which the Crown has an interest* (Fees Framework).

The Committee is classified as a Group 4, Level 2 body under the Fees Framework, and the membership fees will be set at the mid-point of the fee range as per the below:

- a) Chair: \$701.50 per day
- b) Members: \$467.50 per day

Members' fees will be calculated according to time spent on Committee work at a pro-rated hourly rate and payment of fees will be arranged through the secretariat. Taxation matters depend on personal circumstances, but in general fees are classed as schedular payments for the purposes of income tax regulation and are not subject to GST.

Members will also be entitled to be reimbursed for actual and reasonable travel and other expenses incurred while carrying out their duties. Such reimbursement is to be in accordance with the Fees Framework.

All public sector employees appointed to statutory and other public bodies must be able to do their primary job unhindered and without detriment to the public interest. They must not be double paid for their job and their membership of a body covered by the Fees Framework.

Confidentiality

Members must ensure that the confidentiality of Committee business is maintained.

Meetings of the Committee, including agenda material and draft minutes, are confidential and members must ensure that Committee documents are kept secure, and confidentiality is maintained. Committee correspondence or papers can only be released with the approval of the Chair.

Members must not discuss the work of the Committee with people that are not Committee members, unless they have the permission of the Chair.

No surprises policy

The Committee is required to work in accordance with the 'no surprises policy' by providing early warning of any relevant issues to the Minister and the Ministry.

Media policy

If any member of the Committee is approached directly by the media, they should refer them to the Ministry in the first instance. The Ministry's Communications Manager will act on behalf of the Committee to ensure that the query is addressed appropriately.

In general, any media comment on behalf of the Committee will come from the Chair, unless the Chair delegates responsibility to a member. If the Chair requires media training, this should be raised at the earliest opportunity with the Secretariat.

In speaking to the media in their professional or personal capacity, members should make clear to the media that they are not speaking as a member of the Committee unless this is cleared with the Chair.

Reviewing the Terms of Reference

The terms of reference will be reviewed at least once every three years. The Minister may amend, replace or revoke the Committee's terms of reference in accordance with the Healthy Futures Act.