

Briefing for decision

Cabinet paper and government response to Health Committee inquiry into aged care

Date due to MO: 20 January 2026 **Action required by:** 26 January 2026

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Reference:** H2025076257

To: Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health
Hon Casey Costello, Associate 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
Steve Barnes	Associate Deputy Director-General, Strategy and Policy	9(2)(a)
Derek Senior	Manager, Family and Community Policy, Strategy and Policy	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See Minister's Notes Withdrawn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

Cabinet paper and government response to Health Committee inquiry into aged care for feedback

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Date:** 20 January 2026

To: Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health
Hon Casey Costello, Associate Minister of Health

Background

1. The New Zealand National Party and New Zealand First Coalition Agreement includes a commitment to undertake a select committee inquiry into aged care provision, to include supporting people with early onset conditions and what asset thresholds are appropriate in 2023/24.
2. In 2024, the Health Committee (the Committee) began an inquiry into the aged care sector's current and future capacity to provide support services for people experiencing neurological cognitive disorders.
3. The Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) supported the Committee by providing a summary of the submissions received, together with a range of additional information about aged care in New Zealand.
4. The Committee completed its inquiry and published its Committee Report (the report) on 21 November 2025. The Committee made 14 recommendations to improve how the aged care sector may support people experiencing neurological cognitive disorders.
5. On 1 December 2025, the Ministry provided you with a briefing which summarised the Committee's findings and recommendations [H2025076132 refers]. The briefing further noted that many of the recommendations could inform the work of the Aged Care Ministerial Advisory Group.
6. The Government response to the Committee's final report is required to be presented to the House of Representatives by 10 March 2026. A proposed Government response and draft Cabinet paper seeking agreement to it are provided for your feedback.

Timeline and next steps for the Cabinet paper

7. Subject to your feedback, we will make any required changes to the draft response and Cabinet paper and provide updated versions to your offices for Ministerial consultation. We will undertake agency consultation at the same time.
8. To meet timeframes for consideration at the Cabinet Legislation Committee (LEG) on 19 February 2026, a shortened period of combined agency and Ministerial consultation would need to take place between 30 January and 5 February 2026.
9. Following this consultation, we will provide you with a final draft Cabinet paper that reflects any feedback received. We will seek agreement to lodge the Cabinet paper and Government response on 12 February 2026.

10. The table below provides a summary of these steps:

Action	Date
Draft version of Cabinet paper and Government response provided to Ministers for feedback	20 January 2026
Updated versions provided for Ministerial Consultation	29 January 2026
Ministerial and agency consultation	30 January – 5 February 2026
Final version of Cabinet paper and Government response provided to Ministers for approval	10 February 2026
Cabinet paper and response lodged for consideration by LEG	12 February 2026
Cabinet paper and response considered by LEG	19 February 2026
LEG decision confirmed by Cabinet	23 February 2026

11. The Government's response to the Committee's inquiry would then be presented to the House of Representatives by 10 March 2026.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** that the Government is required to respond to the Health Committee's inquiry by 10 March 2026 **Yes/No**
- b) **Note** that a proposed Government response and draft Cabinet paper are attached **Yes/No**
- c) **Indicate** any feedback on the proposed Government response and draft Cabinet paper **Yes/No**
- d) **Note** that following your feedback, we will report back with an updated draft of the Government response and Cabinet paper for joint agency and Ministerial consultation, planned for 30 January – 5 February 2026. **Yes/No**



Steve Barnes

**Associate Deputy Director-General
Strategy and policy**

Date:16/01/2026

Hon Simeon Brown

Minister of Health

Date:

Hon Casey Costello

Associate Minister of Health

Date:

ENDS.