

Aide-Mémoire

Cabinet Legislation Committee: Introduction of HPCA amendment Bill

Date due to MO:	26 March 2026	Meeting:	2 April 2026
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Reference:	H2026080143
To:	Hon Simeon Brown, 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
Allison Bennett	GM, Health System Settings, Strategy and Policy	9(2)(a)
Suzanne Townsend	Manager, Regulatory Policy, Strategy and Policy	9(2)(a)

Aide-Mémoire

Cabinet Legislation Committee: Introduction of HPCA amendment Bill

Date due:	26 March 2026		
To:	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Reference:	H2026080143

About the Meeting

Purpose of Meeting:	You are seeking approval to introduce the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA) Amendment Bill 2026, to the House of Representatives.		
Details of Meeting:	Date:	Thursday 2 April 2026	
	Time:	930am – 10am	
	Venue:	Cabinet Committee Room 8.5	
Ministry representatives:	Allison Bennett – Group Manager, Health System Settings (021 418 226) Eddy Sommers – Principal Policy Analyst, Regulatory Policy		
Cabinet Committee:	Cabinet Legislation Committee		

Summary:

- You are seeking Cabinet approval to introduce the HPCA Amendment Bill. The key features of the Bill are to:
 - Empower the Minister of Health to issue policy directions to responsible authorities (RAs)
 - Make RAs subject to accountability requirements similar to Crown agents
 - Establish a ministerial committee to quickly review regulator decisions about individual practitioners.
- The Bill also makes a range of improvements to improve the basic machinery of the HPCA Act.

Context

1. You are seeking Cabinet approval to introduce the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Amendment Bill 2026, which gives effect to Cabinet decisions to modernise health workforce regulation under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the HPCA Act).
2. The purpose of the Bill is to better align health workforce regulation with patient needs, health system policy, and Government priorities, while maintaining strong protections for quality and safety of care.
3. The Bill implements three core changes to the HPCA Act:
 - a. enable the Minister of Health to issue policy directions to responsible authorities on matters relating to their functions and objectives;
 - b. apply accountability, planning, and reporting requirements to responsible authorities similar to those that apply to Crown agents; and
 - c. establish an independent ministerial review committee to review certain registration and practising decisions affecting individual practitioners.
4. The Bill includes safeguards to preserve regulatory independence. Ministerial directions cannot relate to individual practitioners or specific qualifications, and the Minister must consider impacts on quality and safety before issuing any direction.
5. The Bill also makes a package of operational and technical amendments to improve the functioning of the HPCA Act, including strengthened enforcement tools, improved efficiency of regulatory processes and requiring greater consultation with patients and the public.
6. Talking points are attached as Appendix One.

Next steps

7. The Bill has received a category 5 in the 2026 Legislative Programme (to be referred to select committee before the 2026 General Election).
8. Following confirmation by Cabinet on 7 April, the Bill will be able to be introduced to the House on 8 April. It will be set down for first reading for a later date. Due to a 2-week recess, the first opportunity for this will be the week of 27 April.



Allison Bennett
GM, Health System Settings

Strategy and Policy

25/03/26

Appendix One: Talking points

s9(2)(f)(iv)

PROACTIVELY RELEASED