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20 July 2026

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
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Tēnā kōrua s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for Official Information

Thank you for your email to Manatū Hauora – the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 19 June 2026. It is encouraging to see rangatahi taking an interest in Māori health and the factors that influence health outcomes for whānau and communities across Aotearoa.

Māori health is an important and complex area of public policy, shaped by a range of factors including access to healthcare, housing, education, income, culture, and connection to community. The questions you have raised reflect issues that continue to be discussed across the health sector and are critical to improving outcomes for Māori.

For the purposes of responding, we are treating your correspondence as a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Each part of your request is responded to in turn.

Why do significant health inequalities between Māori and non-Māori still exist?

Māori continue to experience poorer health outcomes compared to non-Māori across a range of measures. These have developed over time and are influenced by a combination of factors, including wider social, economic and environmental determinants of health. Māori are more likely to experience circumstances that can affect health and wellbeing, such as lower household incomes, poorer housing conditions, and barriers to accessing services. Historical factors also continue to influence health outcomes for Māori whānau and communities.

These factors can contribute to higher rates of long-term conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers, as well as lower life expectancy compared with non-Māori. In some cases, Māori may also face barriers to accessing health services, including cost, location, transport, and difficulties navigating the health system.

While progress has been made in some areas, addressing longstanding differences in health outcomes is complex and requires sustained effort over time. Improving Māori health outcomes requires action across government, communities, health services, and whānau to ensure people can access the support they need to live healthy lives.

The Ministry of Health works alongside health agencies, Māori organisations, iwi, and communities to improve health outcomes for Māori and support a health system that better responds to the needs and aspirations of whānau and communities.

You may be interested in reviewing the following materials to support your assignment:

- www.health.govt.nz/maori-health/wai-2575-health-services-and-outcomes-inquiry
- www.health.govt.nz/about-us/new-zealands-health-system/health-system-roles-and-organisations/health-committees-and-boards/hauora-maori-advisory-committee/population-priority-monitoring-reports
- www.health.govt.nz/publications/tatau-kahukura-maori-health-chart-book-2024-online-version

Statistics NZ has also released information highlighting that Māori have had the highest increases in life expectancy. You can find this information through the following links:

- English: www.stats.govt.nz/news/maori-have-highest-increases-in-life-expectancy/
- Te Reo Māori: www.stats.govt.nz/news/ko-te-iwi-maori-te-iwi-kaha-rawa-te-pikinga-ake-o-te-roanga-o-nga-tau-o-te-ora/.

What policies are currently in place to improve health outcomes for Māori?

The priorities in the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027 which can be found here <https://www.health.govt.nz/publications/government-policy-statement-on-health-2024-2027> are aligned with Pae Tū: Hauora Māori Strategy and Whakamaua: Māori Health Action Plan 2020-2025 in a pathway to consolidating and further focusing Māori health outcomes. These documents provide the guiding framework for health entities to work together with Māori to respond to Māori health aspirations and address Māori health needs. Improving Māori health outcomes requires coordinated effort and actions across the health system and broader government.

Pae Tū: Hauora Māori Strategy, which can be found here www.health.govt.nz/strategies-initiatives/health-strategies/pae-tu-hauora-maori-strategy, continues to guide health entities to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and achieve Māori health equity while the Ministry of Health is working on a refreshed Māori Health Strategy. The updated Māori Health Strategy will be released in due course following the passing of the Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) Amendment Bill.

Whakamaua: Māori Health Action Plan 2025 has been the implementation plan for He Korowai Oranga since 2020. Whakamaua sets out outcomes, objectives and priority areas to support the health system to collectively achieve pae ora (healthy futures) for Māori. These can be found on the Ministry's website here:

- www.health.govt.nz/maori-health/whakamaua-maori-health-action-plan-2020-2025
- www.health.govt.nz/publications/the-guide-to-he-korowai-oranga-maori-health-strategy

Legislative changes

The Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) Act 2022 serves as the main legislation for New Zealand's health system, www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2022/30/en/latest/#LMS575405.

On Thursday 2 July, the Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) Amendment Bill passed its third reading and is now in force. Information on this bill and its passing can be found here:

- www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2025/179/en/latest/
- www.beehive.govt.nz/release/patients-now-focus-health-system

This updated legislation aims to enhance access to quality health care for New Zealanders and clarify roles in Māori health.

When the new Māori Health Strategy is released, it will replace Pae Tū: Hauora Māori Strategy and retire He Korowai Oranga and Whakamaui: Māori Health Action Plan.

The Government's vision for Māori health is outcomes-driven and will be achieved by shifting decision-making around resources closer to people and communities, enabling local leadership, collaboration and innovation to meet needs. This is reinforced with a continued focus on Māori health monitoring at all levels of the system.

How is the government working to ensure Māori receive equitable access to healthcare services?

The government is working to improve access to healthcare for Māori in a number of ways. This includes supporting services that are designed to meet the needs of Māori communities, improving access to primary care and preventive services, strengthening the health workforce and Māori governance, and using health data and evidence to better understand where barriers to access exist.

The health system is also monitored and supported by groups such as the Hauora Māori Advisory Committee (HMAC) and Iwi-Māori Partnership Boards (IMPBs), which provide advice and insights on the health needs, aspirations, and experiences of Māori communities. This helps ensure Māori perspectives are considered in health planning and decision-making. Information regarding these groups can be found here:

- www.health.govt.nz/about-us/new-zealands-health-system/health-system-roles-and-organisations/health-committees-and-boards/hauora-maori-advisory-committee
- www.healthnz.govt.nz/about-us/who-we-are/expert-groups-and-networks/expert-groups/iwi-maori-partnership-boards

More broadly, the Government continues to invest in initiatives aimed at improving timely access to healthcare, increasing childhood immunisation rates, and supporting services that can help identify and respond to health needs. These actions are intended to improve health outcomes for all New Zealanders, including Māori. You may be interested in reviewing a report that Te Pou Hauora Māori (Māori Health Group) releases annually about how Māori Health providers are funded: www.health.govt.nz/publications/funding-to-maori-health-providers-202021-to-202425.

You may also like to look through the Ministry's website for reports focused on equity: www.health.govt.nz/search?query=equity+monitoring+reports.

What further steps do you believe are needed to reduce these health disparities?"

Ministry publications, such as the ones linked in this response, identify several focus areas that contribute to improving Māori health outcomes. This includes prevention, early intervention, improving access to healthcare services, strengthening the health workforce, and responding to the wider social factors that influence health and wellbeing.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, 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.

It is heartening to see rangatahi engaging with kaupapa that matter to the wellbeing of whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities across Aotearoa. All the best with your assignment – whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō tātou.

Nāhaku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Whaanga', written in a cursive style.

John Whaanga
Deputy Director-General
Māori Health | Te Pou Hauora Māori