

Briefing

Opportunities to develop a strategic approach to meeting health system information needs

Date due to MO:	22 June 2023	Action required by:	N/A
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Health Report number:	H2023024256
To:	Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, Minister of Health		
Consulted:	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>		

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Dean Rutherford	Deputy Director-General, Evidence, Research and Innovation (Te Pou Whakamārama)	s 9(2)(a)
Peter Dolan	Group Manager, Evidence, Research and Analytics, Evidence, Research and Innovation (Te Pou Whakamārama)	s 9(2)(a)

Minister's office to complete:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Decline | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change | <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | |

Comment:

Opportunities to develop a strategic approach to meeting health system information needs

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Date:** 22 June 2023

To: Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, Minister of Health

Purpose of report

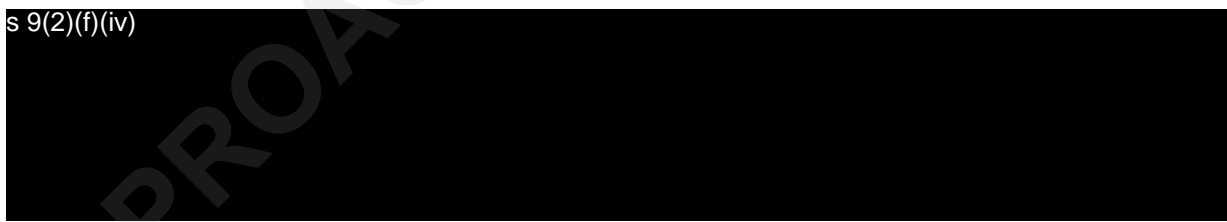
1. This briefing responds to your request to take a strategic approach to meeting information needs across the health system and presents opportunity to invest in meeting some key information needs through Budget 2024.
2. This report discloses all relevant information and implications.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| a) Note through intelligence gathered from across Manatū Hauora, information on nutrition, and mental health and addiction have been confirmed as high priority information needs | Noted |
| b) Agree to meet with officials to discuss options for meeting health information needs in a strategic manner, including consideration of seeking new funding to support a nutrition survey and/or mental health and addiction epidemiological survey | Yes/No |

s 9(2)(f)(iv)



Dean Rutherford
Deputy Director-General
Evidence, Research and Innovation
Date: 20 June 2023

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall
Minister of Health

Date:

Background

1. At your regular meeting with Manatū Hauora officials on 3 April 2023, you asked questions about a mental health and addiction epidemiological survey, and wider health information needs. You requested advice on how health information needs could be met in a more strategic manner.
2. You noted that you have received multiple requests (by Manatū Hauora, other health agencies and researchers) to establish new surveys or conduct surveys that have not been conducted for several years (eg, a nutrition survey). The nature of these requests has highlighted a lack of prioritisation of health information needs.
3. Previous requests for investment in health surveys (beyond the New Zealand Health Survey) have been one-off and disconnected from opportunities across broader data system. This has been a barrier to meeting these needs in a sustainable and ongoing manner.

A strategic approach to meeting information needs

4. Meeting health information needs requires flexibility given the pace at which needs shift, and new needs emerge. There is opportunity to take a strategic and sustainable approach to meeting information needs now and in the future.
5. This could include the establishment of new surveys, adding questions or modules to existing surveys across the data system, longitudinal studies, increased use of administrative data, and Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) based research. There are a range of options relating to the scope and quality of surveys that could provide different cost profiles and delivery timeframes.
6. Taking a strategic approach to meeting information needs will require prioritisation of information needs and gaps, exploration of alternative approaches to meeting these needs, and planned, coordinated, and sustained investment.
7. A Public Health Knowledge and Surveillance System is also being developed, stewarded by the Public Health Agency and Te Aka Whai Ora. The work programme will likely involve a National Public Health Surveillance Strategy and infection and seroprevalence surveillance tool. The intention is to broaden the surveillance landscape and work towards filling gaps in public health surveillance information.

Using administrative data, survey data, and data integration to meet health information needs

8. Administrative data and survey data play critical, and complementary, roles in meeting information needs and supporting the development, design, implementation and evaluation of health-related policies and practices.
9. Administrative data provides valuable insights about populations who interact with the health system (which may not accurately represent prevalence). Well-designed surveys with representative and equitable samples, provide insights about the New Zealand population as a whole.
10. Administrative data, surveys, and integrated data provide complementary insights to identify and understand the prevalence of health conditions, the effectiveness of and demand for services, and variations in the experiences and outcomes of New Zealand's

population. This helps determine the level of investment required across the health system, validate and design intervention, and service provision, and demonstrate return on investment.

The New Zealand Health Survey can meet many, but not all information needs

11. A broad set of health information needs are currently being met through the New Zealand Health Survey and its modules.
12. Manatū Hauora met with Stats NZ on 9 May 2023 to understand the feasibility of meeting some health information needs by utilising their existing surveys. Stats NZ expressed in principle support for the concept and were happy to continue engagement to explore options in further detail.
13. The breadth, specificity, and technical elements of some information needs means that administrative data sources, and existing surveys or survey modules, are not suitable and will not meet the information need. Some topics require specific and targeted surveys that reflect the complex nature of these topics.

There is an opportunity to invest in meeting some key information needs now

14. Engagement across Manatū Hauora, sector partners, and cross-agency work (eg, Stats NZ's Data Investment Plan (DIP)), nutrition and mental health and addiction have been identified as the most key health information needs not currently being met.
15. Stakeholders also raised the need for oral health, eye health, surveillance tools, population specific health and wellbeing insights, and secondary elective health care quality and need. While each of these areas are certainly important, it is possible that these needs could be met through inclusion in the New Zealand Health Survey and other tools over time.

Nutrition information needs

16. A stand-alone survey on nutrition was last conducted for adults in 2008/09, and the need for up-to-date information on dietary intake and nutritional status is well known and acknowledged across the health sector. Most recently, the need for information on food systems and environments, and the important role this plays in equity of health outcomes has been identified through the Pae Ora Strategies.
17. A comprehensive national nutrition survey that encompasses technical elements (such as a dietary recall tool and biomedical testing), will provide the only source of quantitative data on individual dietary intake and nutritional status. This extends beyond the limited data that is currently collected through or could be collected through existing surveys (such as the New Zealand Health Survey and Stats NZ's household surveys).
18. Work is underway with the University of Auckland (co-funded by Manatū Hauora and the Ministry for Primary Industries) to explore design components for a nutrition survey.

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

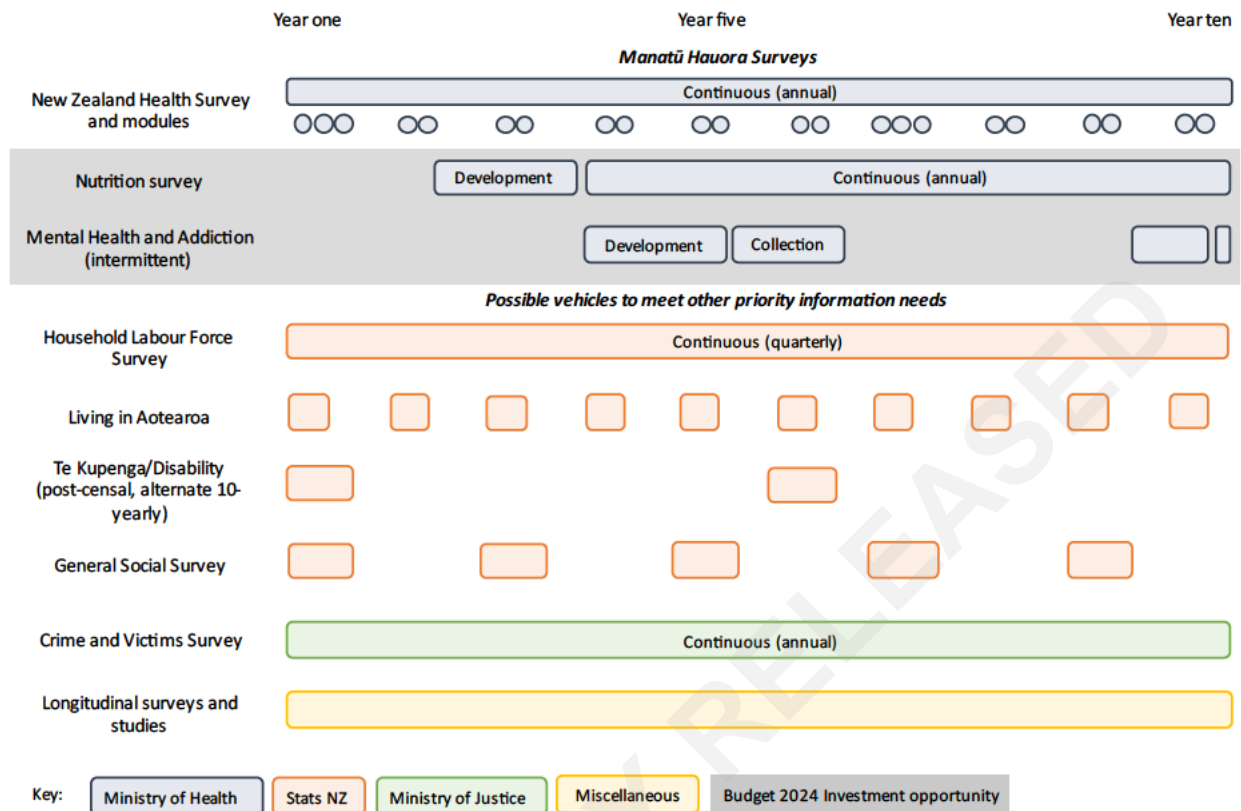
Mental health and addiction information needs

19. A survey on mental health and addiction was last conducted in 2003/04. The need for another mental health and addiction epidemiological survey was accepted in principle by the Government in *He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction* (2018). Additionally, there is strong demand for this survey from mental health and addiction sector groups including Te Pou, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission and the Mental Health Foundation.
20. A stand-alone mental health and addiction epidemiological survey would provide a comprehensive understanding of the range and prevalence of mental health and substance related conditions across the New Zealand population. Extending beyond the population engaging with services (captured in administrative data sources), a stand-alone survey will support identification of unmet needs and effective, evidence informed planning for investment, service design, and service provision.
21. Manatū Hauora has not undertaken any design work on a mental health and addiction epidemiological survey. Early discussions with sector partners suggest the most urgent mental health data needs relate to children and young people. With your endorsement, Manatū Hauora will engage further with sector partners to confirm this focus, and consider options to best meet this information need, as well as a survey programme to meet other mental health data needs.

Investment through Budget 2024 and beyond

22. Utilising the work underway with the University of Auckland, and work across government (such as the DIP and the development of a Public Health Knowledge and Surveillance System) there is opportunity to seek sustained investment in these surveys and ensure these key needs can be met sustainably going forward.
23. Figure 1 below sets out how a nutrition survey or mental health and addiction epidemiological survey could sit within the broader survey environment across government, and other surveys that could supplement this survey, or be strategically utilised to meet a broader set of needs (eg, utilising Te Kupenga to collect information on Māori health, as this is designed to measure concepts from a Māori world view).

Figure 1. strategic approach for meeting health information needs with surveys



24. Given options relating to scope, frequency and design quality, Manatū Hauora seeks a meeting with you to best understand your level of interest in these options, and your priorities.
25. If you agree, Manatū Hauora will report back to you with options related to the nature and timing of these surveys. This will include how this supports and is positioned within a framework for meeting information needs strategically across the government data system. In this, Manatū Hauora will work with its data system partners and social sector agency partners, including Stats NZ.

Equity

26. Adopting a strategic approach to meeting information needs will support increased understanding of inequities across the health system (including across the provision and experience of services, health outcomes, and access) and the factors that contribute to these. By doing this, it supports evidence informed investment for services and policies that address these inequities.
27. There is an opportunity to develop more inclusive approaches for meeting information needs that will result in more robust data for underserved population groups. In some cases, this may include co-design of approaches with communities in particular Māori, Pacific, and disabled people.
28. There will also need to be equity in data access, with the data, statistics, analysis, and insights being made available to the communities of interest in accordance to relevant

data governance frameworks. Manatū Hauora will work with user groups to design effective and consistent means of access across solutions.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

29. Manatū Hauora will conduct this work in a manner that is consistent with and supports the principles and provisions of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This will include identifying information needs for Māori, and vehicles for meeting these needs, in partnership with Māori.
30. Meeting information needs must prioritise Māori needs and aspirations, enable insights and data that have the same level of precision for Māori as for non-Māori, and contribute to improved health outcomes.
31. Te Aka Whai Ora's Māori Data Sovereignty Framework will be at the forefront of this work, and Māori governance of Māori data will be required.

Next steps

32. **s 9(2)(f)(iv)**
[Redacted]
33. Following this discussion, and with your agreement, Manatū Hauora would progress preferred options and report back with detailed advice on scope, scale, and expected costs.
34. In parallel, Manatū Hauora will continue work to explore how other priority information needs can be met in a strategic and sustainable manner. Manatū Hauora will also continue engagement with Stats NZ and other relevant agencies to align with and leverage other strategic initiatives.