



NEW ZEALAND
NURSES
ORGANISATION

TŌPŪTANGA
TAPUHI
KAITIAKI O AOTEAROA



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AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Contents

Environmental Scan	3
Nursing Profile	3
Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic	3
The New Zealand Health System	3
Issues related to Equity	4
Ministry of Health – Definition of Equity	5
The Waitangi Tribunal Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry (Wai 2575)	5
Health and Disability System Review	6
The Evolution and Role of Nursing Unions	6
New Zealand – Future Policy Challenges	6
Reform of Vocational Education	7
Developments Outside of Nursing	7
Overhaul of the Welfare System	7
References	8
APPENDIX 1	9
NZNO Research 2019-2020	9
APPENDIX 2	10
NZNO Publications 2019-2020	10
COVID-19 NZNO Media Releases	11

Environmental Scan

Nursing Profile

The total Aotearoa New Zealand nursing workforce has 60,098 nurses with a current annual practising certificate, 4,585 identifying as Māori and 2,271 as Pacific peoples as of the 30 September 2020. There were 1,621 new nurses added to the registry between 1 April and 31 September 2020 (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2020).

Nurses remain the largest workforce in the Aotearoa New Zealand health care system and have accommodated both challenges and changes to maintain the delivery of nursing care to patients, family and whānau. These include: new models of service delivery, expanding scopes of practice and substitution of less qualified health workers, service rationing, insufficient staffing capacity and the integration agenda aimed at shifting services to primary care, while working across government agencies to raise their profile and garner additional funding.

The Ministry of Health (MoH), through Health Workforce and the Office of the Chief Nurse is committed to supporting nurses and building the Māori and Pacific nursing workforce through dedicated strategies including equity of access, culturally appropriate services and the promotion of health equity.

Furthermore, supporting safe staffing methodologies being implemented in all health care settings ensures an appropriate type and level of care that address the needs of patients, family and whānau and the supports the implementation of significant legislative and regulatory change. For example: further changes to Equal Pay Act, and potential changes following the Health and Disability Systems review, the Waitangi Tribunal Hauora inquiry, and the direct impact from the End of Life Choices Act and Cannabis Referendum on nursing teams and their patients, family and whānau. It is also essential that the nursing profession is represented at the decision-making table to empower and ensure that a nursing voice is clearly advocated on these important issues.

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to outbreak of COVID-19 globally, a pandemic was declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11 March 2020, the MoH and health employers, New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) and other health unions geared up to a national response lead by the Government. NZNO's maintained its advocacy and representation role whilst also communicating to the Government, MoH, health employers and to nurses its expectations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) that required employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees, themselves and others. As per similar organisations, NZNO's internal operations looked to ensure the health and safety of staff during a pandemic or disaster, and operational business continuity.

Additionally, the global impact of COVID-19 has reduced the supply and number of internationally qualified nurses available to work in Aotearoa New Zealand. This has affected health care provision, health and safety of nurses and general workforce in health with a strong focus on public health measure to combat/prevent community spread.

The New Zealand Health System

Increased pressures on the Aotearoa New Zealand health system continue to result in significant demands on the health budget. The health budget continues to be restrained resulting in underfunding which in turn further increased pressure on the public health system.

Some of the factors resulting in increased pressure include:

- a continuing widening gap in income levels, with diseases of poverty increasing;
- continuing health disparity between Māori and non-Māori;
- increasing disability and demand associated with an ageing population;
- increasing non-communicable epidemics and long-term conditions such as diabetes, depression, dementia and heart disease;
- difficulty recruiting health professionals to provincial and rural sectors, including a highly mobile workforce;
- District Health Boards (DHBs) funding constraints which impact negatively on pay parity for members employed in Māori and Iwi workplaces, resulting in pay inequalities DHB employees;
- increasing expectations for partnerships across government agencies to work together on inter-sectoral action or services to address those issues of ill health which are outside of the public health system, which in part are inadequately funded;
- the demand for new technologies and drugs to respond to growing need;
- the global effects of climate change on health, social and economic welfare of communities; and
- a focus on improving equity supported by effective leadership, collaboration across the health sector, iwi, communities, employers and other government agencies with particular focus on mental health, primary care and cancer services.

Issues related to Equity

The government has set ambitious objectives for the health system with a focus on addressing inequalities. The government signalled its intent to invest in the health system to provide the highest levels of care, support and treatment, wherever people live in New Zealand. Funding for vote health as announced in the government's budget 2019 was significantly higher than in previous years. Budget 2019 identified five priorities to improve wellbeing of New Zealanders:

- creating opportunities for productive businesses, regions, iwi and others to transition to a sustainable and low-emissions economy;
- supporting a thriving nation in the digital age through innovation, social and economic opportunities;
- lifting Māori and Pacific incomes, skills, and opportunities;
- reducing child poverty and improving child wellbeing, including addressing family violence; and
- supporting mental wellbeing for all New Zealanders, with a special focus on under 24-year-olds.

These new expectations and priorities will have impact on how the New Zealand Health Strategy is implemented including key areas of focus for the health system.

MoH – Definition of Equity

During March 2019, the MoH published a formal definition of equity:

In Aotearoa New Zealand, people have differences in health that are not only avoidable but unfair and unjust. Equity recognises different people with different levels of advantage require different approaches and resources to get equitable health outcomes.

The definition fits the Aotearoa New Zealand context and aligns with te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations. It also reflects international equity literature and the World Health Organisation's definition of equity.

The definition has gradually been socialised throughout the MoH and wider health sector. It is an important tool that can be readily applied to the work of the MoH and the sector, guiding what is done to make health care more equitable. It is also notable that this definition was an underlying theme in the Health and Disability System Review Interim report released during August 2019.

The Waitangi Tribunal Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry (Wai 2575)

Wai 2575 the Health Services and Outcome Inquiry was initiated in 2016. The inquiry is designed a pathway to hear nationally significant claims about grievance relating to health services and outcomes of national significance. According to the MoH as in October 2018 there are about 205 historical claims covering issues relating to the health system, specific health services and outcomes, including health equity, primary care, disability services and Māori health providers.

Stage one of the inquiry involved hearings between October and December 2018 looking into legislative and policy frameworks of primary health care systems as they relate to claims from Māori Primary Health Organisations & Providers (Wai 1315) and the National Hauora Coalition (Wai 2687) and other interested parties. This stage concluded during March 2019.

Stage two commenced mid-2019 covering three priority areas of mental health (including suicide and self-harm) Māori with disabilities and issues of alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse.

It is expected that the inquiry will have a stage three which will cover national significant issues and eligible historical issues. Te Rūnanga and Māori nurses provided evidence during stage one of the inquiry and reflected in the overarching recommendations as follows:

- that the Crown ensure that the legislative and policy framework of the New Zealand primary health care system recognise and provide for the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles:
 - that the Crown commit itself and the health sector to achieve equitable health outcomes for Māori;
 - that the Crown commit to exploring the concept of a stand-alone Māori primary health authority;
 - the Crown and representatives of the Wai 1315 and Wai 2687 claimants agree upon a methodology for the assessment of the extent of underfunding of Māori primary health organisations and providers; and

- that He Korowai Oranga is reviewed considering the content of this report. It, the New Zealand Health Strategy, and the Primary Health Care Strategy, and their relevant action plans.

It is expected that Wai 2752 will continue to provide a critical pathway to ensure that the Crown progresses the above recommendations.

Health and Disability System Review

A review of the health and disability system led by the Minister of Health, concluded in early 2020. The review provided a report to the Government, including recommendations, on:

- A sustainable and forward-looking Health and Disability System that is well placed to respond to future needs of all New Zealanders:
 - is designed to achieve better health and wellness outcomes for all New Zealanders;
 - ensures improvements in health outcomes of Māori and other population groups;
 - has reduced barriers to access to both health and disability services to achieve equitable outcomes for all parts of the population; and
 - improves the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the Health and Disability System, including institutional, funding and governance arrangements.
- How the recommendations could be implemented.

The sector is waiting on the formation of the new government, post the election held on 17 October 2020 for the recommendations to be progressed.

The Evolution and Role of Nursing Unions

The Care and Support Workers Settlement Act 2017 negotiated by E tū, NZNO and Public Service Association (PSA) generated improved pay rates for Caregivers / Kaiāwhina working in aged care, disability and the home and support sector. The investment of over \$2 billion announced in April 2017 lifted pay rates for care and support workers by over forty percent. This has an ongoing impact on NZNO collective agreement bargaining in all sectors as caregiver rates moved past the rates of Hospital Aides, Enrolled Nurses and newly graduated Registered Nurses outside of the aged care sector.

In response NZNO developed a Pay Equity strategy for all NZNO members for the period 2018-21 to be progressed through collective bargaining.

Further the DHB / NZNO Multi- employer Collective Agreement (MECA) settlement, generated the impetus for the Accord struck between Government, NZNO and DHB employers prior to ratification of the DHB MECA. The Accord has three stages of exploring initiatives to address the staffing crisis in DHBs –the first being to extend the Nurse Entry to Practice program to all new graduate nurses and implement a Enrolled nurses supported into practice (ENSIPP) programme – a campaign NZNO has led for the last nine years. It is expected outcome from these initiatives will be rolled out during 2020/21 with funding of over \$24m over 4 years announced by the government in budget 2019.

New Zealand – Future Policy Challenges

Future policy challenges include:

- recruitment – numbers in training are falling, attracting men to nursing, growing Māori and Pacific nurse and a reliance Internationally Qualified Nurses.;
- safe staffing - quality and safety, Care Capacity Demand Management (CCDM), what is the right skill mix of Enrolled nurses (ENs), Registered nurses (RNs), Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and Health Care Assistants (HCAs)?;
- mental wellbeing of nurses – rise in mental health issues at a population level, and global uncertainty;
- enabling regulatory and legislative systems - workforce planning based on skills and competencies required rather than profession?; and
- retention – turnover, high global demand, mobility, and the future in a Covid-19 world?

Reform of Vocational Education

The reform of vocational education brings together the original review of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, led by the Ministry of Education and the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) Road Map 2020 led by the Tertiary Education Commission. Which looked to secure a sustainable future for institutes and polytechnics (ITPs).

The government has undertaken consultation on a wide range of proposals. The most significant proposal involves:

- setting up the new Institute (the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology); an Establishment Unit, with a Chair and Council designate, to start planning for the transition to the Institute by 1 September 2019;
- to ensure that the transition of the role of supporting on-the-job learning is carefully managed and funded, it is proposed that ITOs or holding organisations (formed from the existing ITOs) would be able to continue to operate current arrangements for supporting on-the-job training until the end of 2022; and
- working with industry to set up workforce development councils after 1 April 2020, when legislative changes are enacted, with the aim of completing the establishment by June 2021.

It is possible and anticipated that the proposals might have an impact on the ITP sector with flow on consequences to nursing education including models of funding. Reform has the potential to destabilise schools of nursing in the ITP sector consequently affect the quality of nursing education and the supply of nursing in New Zealand.

Developments Outside of Nursing

Overhaul of the Welfare System

The Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) was established during May 2018 to provide independent advice to government on priority areas for reform required to deliver a welfare system that ensures that people are treated with and can live in dignity, can participate in their communities and have adequate income and standard of living and the skill and training to secure meaningful employment. Any proposed changes to the welfare system are expected to reflect and contribute to the government's priority to achieve poverty reduction targets.

The WEAG report released during May 2019 contained 42 key recommendations. The government response to the recommendations involved:

- removing the section 192 sanction at a cost of \$113.4 million over 4 years expected to come into effect on 1 April 2020;
- increasing the abatement thresholds of main benefits over the next four years intended to benefit around 73,000 low income individuals and families and is a total investment of \$97.1 million over 4 years expected to come into effect on 1 April 2020; and
- \$76.3 million will be allocated to fund up to 263 new front line staff over four years to help support more people into meaningful work.

The government's response and combined investment in part is in line with NZNO's priority for reduction in poverty and will provide NZNO' further opportunities to lobby and advocate for welfare system changes to improve income levels and access to meaningful work for people on low income.

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Ministry of Health. March 2019. <https://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/what-we-do/work-programme-2019-20/achieving-equity>

APPENDIX 1

NZNO Research 2019-2020

2020

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2019

Came, H., McCreanor, T., Manson, L., Nuku, K. Upholding Te Tiriti, Ending Institutional Racism and Crown Inaction on Health Equity. *The New Zealand Medical Journal* (Online); Christchurch Vol. 132, Iss. 1492, (Mar 29, 2019): 61-66.

Gander, P.H., O’Keeffe, K.M, Santos-Fernandez, E., Huntington, A., Walker, L., & Willis, J. (2019). Fatigue and nurses’ work patterns: An online questionnaire survey. *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 98: 67-74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2019.06.011>

APPENDIX 2

NZNO Publications 2019-2020

2020

- Nursing Manifesto – Nursing matters even more in 2020
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/Portals/0/publications/Nursing%20Manifesto%202020.pdf?ver=U35rcyW2A3QT5diL0yxGgg%3d%3d>
- Guideline: NZNO guide to preparing annual general meeting remits
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=6DHUPVmRgnk%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Guideline: Obligations in a pandemic or disaster (update)
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=vIDcH9XdIDg%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Position Statement: External researchers requesting support from NZNO
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Ye6PGw8k-BM%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Position Statement: Rāhui COVID-19: PPE to guide risk assessment
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CC8mcoCpPU%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Advisory Research Paper – Violence and aggression against nurses
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=lcYhOFLMnN0%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Survey Insights: An analysis of the 2020 NZNO PPE survey

2019

- Growing nurses into governance: A governance toolkit
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=BMuMA18DWM8%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Guideline: Code of Ethics <https://www.nzno.org.nz/Portals/0/publications/Guideline%20-%20Code%20of%20Ethics%202019.pdf?ver=19LQpYx8wsprijbTnT9pWw%3d%3d>
- Position Statement: Bullying
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=5OY8Jflm1mA%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Guideline: Guidelines for nurses on the administration of medicines
[https://www.nzno.org.nz/Portals/0/publications/Guideline%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Nurses%20on%20the%20Administration%20of%20Medicines%20\(002\).pdf?ver=72ENNovqJ9HIYkn-7-Fcjw%3d%3d](https://www.nzno.org.nz/Portals/0/publications/Guideline%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Nurses%20on%20the%20Administration%20of%20Medicines%20(002).pdf?ver=72ENNovqJ9HIYkn-7-Fcjw%3d%3d)
- Guideline: Social media and the nursing profession
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mi3K2GhXMk0%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Position Statement: Violence and aggression towards nurses
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JpI7UyOnRCw%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Enrolled Nurses – Scope of practice survey
<https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jS3FVGz922c%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918>
- Report: National nursing student survey
https://www.nzno.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Upm7_afcPOg%3d&tabid=109&portalid=0&mid=4918

COVID-19 NZNO Media Releases

- https://www.nzno.org.nz/about_us/media_releases/artmid/4731/articleid/2019/report-reveals-frontline-nurses%E2%80%99-struggles-during-covid-19-pandemic
- https://www.nzno.org.nz/about_us/media_releases/artmid/4731/articleid/2010/serious-lessons-from-waitakere-hospital-covid-19-report
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- https://www.nzno.org.nz/about_us/media_releases/artmid/4731/articleid/1864/nzno-calls-for-decisiveness-and-unity-in-covid-19-response
- https://www.nzno.org.nz/about_us/media_releases/artmid/4731/articleid/1885/nurses-must-be-given-personal-protective-equipment-now
- https://www.nzno.org.nz/about_us/media_releases/artmid/4731/articleid/1894/nzno-urges-government-and-health-employers-to-adopt-he-kete-tapuhi-ora-package