



Te Poari Kaimātai
Hinengaro o Aotearoa

NEW ZEALAND PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD

Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Health

March 2024





Lisa Lawrence

Welcome from our Board Chair

Tēnā koe Minister Reti

Me mahi tahi tātou mo te oranga o te katoa.

We must work together for the wellbeing of all.

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister of Health.

In holding this portfolio, it is vital for you to be informed about the current state of the psychology workforce in New Zealand and to understand the challenges facing our professionals, training programme requirements and population needs.

The New Zealand Psychologists Board (NZPB) are committed to protecting the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring that psychologists are competent and fit to practice. We do this by focusing on the core business of registering psychologists, monitoring competence and conduct with efficacy, energy and with right touch regulation.

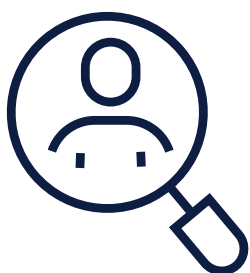
This briefing provides an overview of the prevailing issues across the profession and emphasises NZPB's strategic priorities set out in **Hauora for All 2021-2025**, which are helping to address challenges.

Thank you for considering our briefing and I wish you well in your role.

Mauri ora

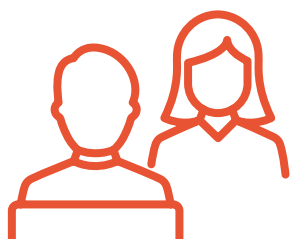
Lisa Lawrence
Board Chair

A Glance at the Profession



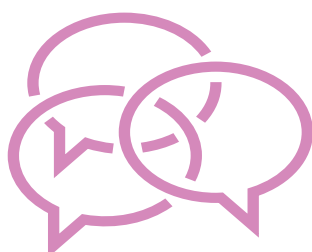
4724

Registered
Psychologists



3872

Practising
Psychologists



55

New
Complaints



272

New
Registrants



21

Accredited
Training
Programmes



Hauora For All

In 2021, the New Zealand Psychologists Board launched the Hauora for All Strategy 2021-25.

Our five key strategic priorities are:

- Accessibility, acceptability and equity
- Future workforce
- Elevating Māori paradigms in psychology
- Building trust with the psychology profession
- Leadership

Purpose: Hauora for all – transforming psychology in Aotearoa

Vision: Everybody can access safe and effective psychology, when they need it, in a way that works for them.

Accessibility, acceptability and equity

We will improve accessibility, acceptability and equity in psychology practice, through the use of robust data and evidence that advocates for necessary changes to the sector.

What will we focus on, and what actions will start to deliver the change we want to see?

Collaborating with public institutions and non-government organisations to identify opportunities for increasing the number of psychologists available across all communities in Aotearoa e.g. work with government agencies and non-government agencies etc. to identify innovative solutions that increase numbers of psychologists available in the public sector (or funded services).

Review accreditation standards and incorporate a requirement that training programmes have an approach for improving equity of access to the programme, in particular for Māori.

Establish a regular report on equity of psychology in the New Zealand.

Indicators of success

- Increase in number of Māori psychologists
- Increase in the number of psychologists that are available to all through public institutions

Future workforce

We will seek changes in the training and structuring of the psychology workforce, so that psychology need is met by an appropriate range of competent psychological services.

What will we focus on, and what actions will start to deliver the change we want to see?

Introduce new registration pathways for overseas applicants that ensures internationally-trained psychologists are equipped to provide services in Aotearoa.

Explore the potential for a new psychology-related scope of practice, qualified to provide services for low-risk need.

Strengthen the current accreditation process in collaboration with training providers and other stakeholders.

Indicators of success

- Increase in % of diverse populations on the psychologists register
- Establishment of new training models

Continued ...

Elevating Māori paradigms in psychology

We will support our workforce to be able to deliver to tangata whenua. We will support the bicultural space to be embraced and understood.

What will we focus on, and what actions will start to deliver the change we want to see?

Update competency standards and code of ethics for registered psychologists to reflect the Board's expectation of safe and ethical clinical and cultural psychology practice.

Work with He Paiaka Tōtara to understand how we can support their leadership in psychology.

The Secretariat will grow its capability working in Te Ao Māori, including implementing a diversity and inclusion framework throughout our organisation.

Review accreditation standards to ensure that training programmes have systems in place that demonstrate that graduates are able to provide culturally-safe services to Māori.

Identify and implement strategies to support Māori psychologists into leadership and positions of influence.

Design and introduce training for currently registered psychologists to provide more culturally-safe psychology services.

Indicators of success

- Every training programme teaches the application of the Meihana Model
- Indigenous psychology is reflected in the accreditation standards

Building trust with the psychology workforce

We will strengthen engagement with the psychology profession and encourage two-way communications.

What will we focus on, and what actions will start to deliver the change we want to see?

Board representatives will be present and accountable at relevant psychology forums.

Develop a communications strategy that addresses the need for genuine engagement, and regular, informative updates for stakeholders on our activities.

Improve systems to ensure that notifications about psychologists' practice are managed in a timely, sensitive and effective way.

We will hold wānanga with psychologists to kōrerorero on the direction of, and issues facing, psychology.

Indicators of success

- Improved engagement results with psychologists and training institutions

Continued ...

Leadership

To transform psychology in Aotearoa, we will lead the profession to embrace the challenges ahead. This will strengthen the mechanisms we have in place to protect public safety.

What will we focus on, and what actions will start to deliver the change we want to see?

Promote the use of te reo Māori in our communications and public profile.

All policy and strategy decisions we make will identify our bicultural obligations and any opportunities to elevate Māori paradigms in psychology.

Identify and develop strategic relationships that will progress key priorities for the Board:

- Accessibility, acceptability and equity
- Future workforce
- Elevating Māori paradigms

Report regularly on achievement of activities and outcomes in our strategy.

Indicators of success

- There is competition for appointments on the Board

Strategic wins

The NZPB has enjoyed some key accomplishments over the last 12-24 months.

Connecting with the profession through a National Roadshow

Board and Secretariat staff travelled to cities and communities throughout New Zealand facilitating workshop sessions with psychologists. We listened to challenges facing the profession and engaged in discussions on scopes of practice and cultural competency programmes for both overseas trained and locally trained psychologists. The Board welcomed this opportunity to interact with the profession which helped strengthen relationships and understand perspectives.

Cultural Competency Programme for Overseas Trained Psychologists

Following two rounds of consultation with the profession and key stakeholders, the Board have approved the implementation of this refreshed registration pathway. The aim of the programme is to equip new-to-New Zealand psychologists to provide professional services in a New Zealand context and develop skills to work safely with tangata whenua.

Code of Conduct development and Code of Ethics refresh

These documents are nearing consultation stage where we will seek input from the profession, major stakeholders and key employers. The Code of Conduct provides specific direction about how psychologists should behave in their professional and, in some cases, personal action. The Code of Ethics provides a foundation for the practice of psychology by defining a set of principles and ways of thinking that can be used to guide decision making. Both codes have been developed collectively with psychology professional bodies.

Scopes of Practice Consultation

The purpose of NZPB's strategy, Hauora for all – transforming psychology in Aotearoa, includes transforming psychology in a manner that strengthens public safety by ensuring that the mechanisms we have in place are robust. This includes ensuring scopes of practice are fit for purpose, consistent with the Act and enable a flexible and responsive workforce in an ever-changing landscape. An initial scopes of practice consultation document is currently being considered by the profession. This is the first stage of a complex process as we develop the collective thinking of the profession, stakeholders and advisory groups.

Current challenges

Despite progress, several challenge areas still exist and indicate the wider environmental context NZPB are operating in.



Prevalence of Mental Health Disorders

Mental health disorders, including anxiety, clinical depression, and substance abuse, continue to affect a significant portion of the population. Year on year we are seeing a rise in mental health concerns, especially among young adults and marginalised communities.



Access to Psychology Services

Despite efforts to improve accessibility, many individuals still face barriers to accessing psychology services. Long wait times, shortage of psychologists, and geographical disparities limit the availability of timely and adequate care.



Increasing inequities in vulnerable populations

- Māori and Pasifika communities experience disproportionately high rates of mental health disorders compared to the general population. Historical and ongoing socio-economic disparities, cultural barriers, and systemic discrimination contribute to these disparities.
- Individuals living in rural and remote areas often face challenges in accessing mental health services due to geographical barriers, limited-service availability, and lack of culturally appropriate support. This results in inequities in service provision and outcomes compared to urban areas.
- Marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk of mental health issues due to experiences of discrimination, bullying, and rejection. Limited access to affirming psychology services further exacerbates these challenges.
- Socio-economic factors, including income inequality and material poverty, are closely linked to mental health outcomes. Lower-income individuals and families are more likely to experience stress, trauma, and inadequate access to mental health support services. Those who can afford to pay to see a psychologist can be seen sooner in private practice which is driving inequity.



Workforce supply and demand

New Zealand is facing a shortage of psychologists which is particularly acute in rural and remote areas where services are limited. The high demand for services continues to rise due to population growth, environmental & economic changes and increased awareness of mental health issues. This high demand exacerbates existing workforce shortages of both practitioners and the required clinical supervisors and strains current resources significantly. It is crucial that NZPB, along with psychology professional bodies, education providers and major employers (ACC, Corrections, Education, Defence and Health) play key a role in supporting the establishment of a sustainable workforce development strategy.



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Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact our office. We would relish the opportunity to meet and discuss our profession with you in more detail.

We thank you for considering our briefing and invite further dialogue to address these critical issues. The NZPB is committed to collaborating with your office and stakeholders to enhance psychology service provision across New Zealand.