

NGO Council Update



4 March 2021

Kia ora koutou

In late 2020 we farewelled Sarah Doherty, our Secretariat. In January 2021 Jason Myers made the decision that he was unable to continue in his new role as Council Chair due to other commitments. Frances Blyth agreed to take over as Interim Chair until we replace the Secretariat and decide on a new Chair and Deputy.

The NGO Council met by zoom on 26 February, the first meeting of 2021. We welcomed the 5 new Council members elected late last year who bring extensive experience of the NGO Health and Disability sector. The full list of Council members is on the NGO Health and Disability Network website: www.ngo.health.govt.nz

The Council is now working with the Ministry to replace our Secretariat, and we are reviewing our terms of reference, as planned, to make sure they are fit for purpose. Once we have a Secretariat in place we will be able to schedule and plan for our national NGO Forum meeting which the Ministry and the Council host together.

During 2020 the Council commissioned three reports responding to the Health and Disability Systems Review (H&DSR) Report. The reports reflect the views of NGOs in the Māori, Pacific and Disability Support services areas. The Council accepted all three reports at the meeting and agreed plans for further dissemination of the reports including through our networks, the Ministry of Health and the Implementation Unit in the Prime Minister's Department. The three reports contain essential advice and perspectives from the sector. We thank all those NGOs and individuals who were involved in the discussions and analysis that went into the reports.

Ministry of Health officials who attended part of the Council meeting include Clare Perry, Acting Deputy Director-General, Health System Innovation and Improvement (HSII) and Adeline Cumings, Manager, Office of the Deputy Director-General HSII. Clare discussed with us the Ministry and Ministers' priorities for the coming year which include pandemic management, implementation work under the H&DSR, Mental Health and Addictions, DHB performance, Pharmac, Smokefree 2025, Abortion Law Reform and End of Life Choice Act, and Capital projects. Ongoing priorities are: keeping the system running (BAU) and improving equity and services for Māori. In addition, there are two Manifesto priorities on the agenda: the Dementia Action Plan and the establishment of an Aged Care Commissioner.

The Council noted that it wants to be at the front end of discussions that affect NGOs so that policies are shaped with advice from the Council on NGO perspectives. We specifically discussed our interest in becoming more engaged in the development of Health workforce strategies.

The Council's next meeting is scheduled for 16 April, and we hope to meet in person in Wellington.

Prepared by Frances Blyth, Personal Health Representative and Interim Chair