

Update from the Health and Disability NGO Council - September 2020

The Health and Disability NGO Council met via Zoom on 18 September 2020.

Council Roundtable

Council members began with sharing experiences over the past three months, including the latest round of Covid-19 spread in our country as it affects NGO's. Experiences are obviously tiered with Auckland bearing the brunt.

Challenges centred around mental health issues, burnt out workforce, financial stress on smaller organisations, contract change expectations by funders.

The pandemic has also been a catalyst to highlight again the need for pay equity. Moving to online formats has been a positive in some workplaces and an additional challenge for others.

Council elections

The NGO Council confirmed the election of Dr Jason Myers, CE of NZ AIDS Foundation, as the new Chairperson.

Wider Council elections are currently underway, with half of the Council seats up for re-election. Nominations are open until 27 September and voting will take place from 5 to 18 October

Council acknowledged and thanked several Council members who are standing down, for their service to the sector and to the Council. Outgoing Council members include Beverly Te Huia – Māori Health rep and Council Chair; Marese McGee – Disability Support Rep and Deputy Chair; Carole Koha – Māori Health rep; and Trevor Simpson – Public Health rep.

Health, Community and Social Services Workforce Development Council - Interim Establishment Board

David Waters, Chair of the Interim Establishment Board presented a summary of the work to date. This Board is the fore runner to one of six Workforce Development Councils that will be at the heart of the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE), a piece of work that will transform vocational training across all sectors. This particular Workforce Development Council is charged with engaging with our sector, a survey will be sent to network members in the coming weeks.

Health and Disability System Review

The NGO Council continues work on reviewing the report, through the multiple lenses of Maori Health NGOs, Pacific Health NGOs, and Disability Support NGOs.

Ministry of Health Update

Clare Perry, Acting Deputy Director General, Health System Improvement and Innovation, joined the meeting. Clare thanked NGO's for their work and leadership through these tough times, and noted that because of a great community response our health system hasn't been disabled as it has in some other countries. The Ministry of Health has an ongoing and active role in vaccine development.

The policy work in response to the Health and Disability System Review is being done by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet under the lead of Steven McKernan, a former Director General of Health, and final decisions will be made by the future government.

Report compiled by Graham Walker, Personal Health representative.