



# Te Kawa Mataaho

Public Service Commission

21 March 2025

Thomas Raethel  
[LabourResearch@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:LabourResearch@parliament.govt.nz)

Dear Thomas

**Official Information Request**  
**Our Ref: PSCR 2025-0203**

I refer to your official information request received on 18 February 2025 for:

- *Copies of any correspondence between Simeon Brown and/or his office and any other stakeholders in HNZ regarding the creation and function of the taskforce.*
- *Copies of any communications between Te Whatu Ora, the health minister's office, and other stakeholders regarding the decision to create the taskforce in response to Professor Levy's health system reset plan*
- *Copies of any reports, briefings, or plans produced by the taskforce, including information related to cost savings, structural changes, and health priorities.*
- *Copies of any communications regarding the potential inclusion of legislative changes to the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022, and the possible impact on iwi Māori partnership boards.*
- *Copies of any documents related to the possible incorporation of the taskforce's proposals into the upcoming Budget.*
- *Copies of any documents or internal discussions regarding Hamiora Bowkett's role in the taskforce.*
- *Where a document that falls under scope of this request cannot be released, please supply a summary of that document's contents.*

**Information being released**

On 29 January 2025 the Minister of Health instructed the Public Service Commissioner to establish a Unit within Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (the Commission) to support the Minister of Health's focus on driving the delivery of the Government's key priorities for Health NZ.

The Unit is also providing independent assurance to ensure the programme of work being progressed by Health NZ to deliver the health targets and priorities is supported by clear and effective plans and accountability arrangements.

The Unit is on a time limited basis to support the development of advice to enable the Minister of Health to drive accountability and performance in Health New Zealand. The Unit's initial work will

be finalised around early to mid-March 2025. The ongoing role and composition of the Unit beyond this period is still being worked through, however the work of the unit is expected to be completed by May 2025.

### Information being released

Please find enclosed the following documents outlining the role of the Unit.

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1	Attachment	Health Sprint Team	Released in part
2	29 January 2025	Letter from Hon Simeon Brown to Lester Levy	Released in full
3	29 January 2025	Letter from Hon Simeon Brown to Diana Sarfati	Released in full

I have decided to release the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under the section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) in order to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials.

### Information publicly available

The following information is also covered by your request and is publicly available on the Commission's website at the link provided in the table below.

Item	Date	Document Description	Website
4	7 March 2025	Cabinet Paper – Health Delivery Plan	<a href="https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Health-delivery-plan.pdf">https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Health-delivery-plan.pdf</a>

Accordingly, I have refused this part of your request for the document listed in the above table under section 18(d) of the OIA on the grounds the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

There are additional documents covered by your request that I have decided to withhold in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA in order to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials. In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA.

Hamiora Bowkett role within the Unit is the Executive Director.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact [Enquiries@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:Enquiries@publicservice.govt.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that we intend to publish this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents on the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicky Dirks', with a stylized, cursive script.


Nicky Dirks

**Manager – Ministerial and Executive Services**  
**Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission**


## Health Sprint team

- A Sprint Team is being established this week within the Public Service Commission, led by Hamiora Bowkett. The Commission and DPMC will be supporting this team to direct resources and support the delivery of the team's work to support the Minister.
- The Sprint Team will provide the Minister with an independent perspective and advice, supported by Central Agencies, to help the Minister in driving change and delivery within Health NZ and the Ministry of Health. This includes ensuring the Minister is supported to use his levers and interventions.
- The immediate focus of the team over the next five weeks is on ensuring there is a clear plan against the critical areas to lift Health New Zealand's delivery and performance: Access to GPs and medicines; ED wait times; financial management; and capital programme delivery. This work will be focused on identifying critical levers and incentives to drive progress against to lift Health NZ's performance. This work will also consider the Ministry of Health's role to drive delivery in these areas.
- The Minister has a strong focus on getting assurance on Health New Zealand's financial management, particularly in relation to getting confidence over ensuring funding is going to where it needs to, and capital programme delivery. Both will be critical priorities for the Sprint Team to focus on as part of the first stage of work. The team and Central Agencies will need to draw on expertise in these areas to provide the Minister with confidence on the current state of play and actions required to address identified delivery and performance issues.

9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice



9(2)(f)(iv) confidentiality of advice



- The outcome of this work will support the Minister to publicly signal further direction and steps the Minister will be taking to drive the health system's performance.

# Hon Simeon Brown

Minister of Health  
Minister for State Owned Enterprises  
Minister for Auckland



29 January 2025

Dr Diana Sarfati  
Director-General of Health  
Ministry of Health

*Copy to:* Ben King, DPMC

Dear Diana

## **Public Service Commission Taskforce – Health**

As the new Minister of Health, my priority is ensuring that all New Zealanders have access to timely, high-quality healthcare. Every decision I make will be focused on delivering better outcomes for patients, ensuring value for taxpayer investment, and supporting our hardworking health workforce.

New Zealanders deserve a health system that delivers - one that ensures timely surgeries, provides prompt and high-quality primary care, and provides confidence in its efficiency and commitment to delivering results. Achieving this demands both responsiveness and a strong sense of urgency.

As Minister, it is my expectation that we work together to achieve these goals while upholding accountability, transparency, and measurable improvements.

To support these objectives, I have directed the Public Service Commission to establish a task force to provide me with independent advice on the performance and future direction of the health system. This task force, led by Hamiora Bowkett, comprises senior and respected public servants from across government and will report to Sir Brian Roche, PSC and Ben King, DPMC. It is the government's expectation that you work constructively and promptly with the task force, providing the necessary support and expertise.

Specifically, I expect you to:

1. Respond promptly to all requests for information and support from the task force
2. Ensure their work is based on accurate, evidence-based data and up-to-date information
3. Actively assist the task force in their preparation of a Cabinet paper for my review within two weeks of receipt of this letter

Your full cooperation with, and active support for, the task force will be critical in delivering practical, actionable recommendations to improve healthcare in New Zealand.

New Zealanders expect results, and it is our responsibility to deliver a healthcare system that is effective, efficient, and focused on outcomes that matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Simeon Brown', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Simeon Brown  
Minister of Health

# Hon Simeon Brown

Minister of Health  
Minister for State Owned Enterprises  
Minister for Auckland



29 January 2025

Professor Lester Levy  
Board Chair  
Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora

Copy to: Margie Apa, Chief Executive and Ben King, DPMC

Dear Lester

## Public Service Commission Taskforce – Health

As the new Minister of Health and your responsible Minister, my priority is ensuring that all New Zealanders have access to timely, high-quality healthcare. Every decision I make will be focused on delivering better outcomes for patients, ensuring value for taxpayer investment, and supporting our hardworking health workforce.

New Zealanders deserve a health system that delivers - one that ensures timely surgeries, provides prompt and high-quality primary care, and provides confidence in its efficiency and commitment to delivering results. Achieving this demands both responsiveness and a strong sense of urgency.

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Your full cooperation with, and active support for, the task force will be critical in delivering practical, actionable recommendations to improve healthcare in New Zealand.

New Zealanders expect results, and it is our responsibility to deliver a healthcare system that is effective, efficient, and focused on outcomes that matter. I will expect regular updates from you on progress.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Brown'.

Hon Simeon Brown  
Minister of Health