

11 November 2022

Catherine Proffitt
Inquiry Director
New Zealand Productivity Commission

Re: A Fair Chance for All. Interim report

Tēnā koe Catherine

Having made a submission to the Inquiry in 2021, Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa, New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to give feedback on the Productivity Commissions interim report on ‘A fair chance for all. Breaking the cycle of persistent disadvantage.’

NZNO represents nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment matters. NZNO embraces the articles of te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvements of the health status and outcomes for all Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ) through influencing health, employment, and social policy development.

While endorsing the interim recommendations in the report, NZNO makes the following observations of issues that need strengthening.

Climate Change

The impact of climate change and the likelihood that those experiencing persistent disadvantage will be impacted to a greater extent by climate related events such as flooding and coastal inundation warrants further emphasis using an anticipatory governance framework as described in the report. NZNO endorses a *just transition*¹ approach that puts to the fore the needs of communities at greatest risk. This can be achieved with planning using an anticipatory governance framework.

Tino Rangatiratanga

Monitoring and evaluation of public management systems (PMS) needs to be developed and led by those groups that experience persistent disadvantage. They are in the best position to inform the learning and development that must be built into the implementation of new systems that prioritise social inclusion and mauri ora. NZNO recognises and respects the right of Māori to have control over their own health and wellbeing. We support Māori in the exercise of tino rangatiratanga, through self-determination and mana motuhake in the design, delivery, and monitoring of PMS. Building enduring relationships and partnerships with te Tiriti partners, so Māori are actively involved in decision- making must form the foundation of a PMS that adopts new values.

Causes of persistent disadvantage

Digital exclusion is also a cause of persistent disadvantage whether through lack of access to devices and fibre or wifi because of costs or through the knowledge and skills required to participate in and benefit from digital inclusion. Digital access to many of the services and resources of the PMS,

¹ <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/just-transition/>

including health, assumes individuals have a functioning device, internet access, an email account and the skills and support to engage successfully. Systems change must include allowances for varied levels of digital access.

Short-termism and status quo bias

In highlighting this barrier of the four the report identifies, NZNO does not wish to diminish the impact of power imbalances and discrimination and the ongoing impact of colonization as deeply embedded barriers to addressing persistent disadvantage. Short-termism of funding is frequently identified in the health sector as a barrier to the success of projects that could and should contribute to lifting people out of persistent disadvantage. However, short term funding of perhaps a few years, with no certainty beyond that, cannot support the development of a sustainable service needed to address disadvantage which in some circumstances maybe intergenerational. Sustainability of support for these kinds of initiatives needs to be addressed if the three domains of disadvantage (left out; doing without; income poor) are to be addressed.

Equity

Māori are our priority population for all equity work. NZNO shares the intent of the Ministry of Health's definition of equity where *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.*² This equally applies to NZNO's work across professional, industrial and members' activities and drives our responses to submissions including our feedback to the Productivity Commission on this interim report. Our contribution as a CTU affiliate is also equity focused and we endorse their recommendation of an anticipatory governance framework that can address, among other things, climate change responses and global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

NZNO seeks further opportunity to contribute to the Commissions work on this report and future inquiries especially those that seek to address matters that significantly impact health and wellbeing such as persistent disadvantage. There is overwhelming evidence from NZ studies, all referred to by the Inquiry, which confirm the view that persistent disadvantage is 'baked in' in the earliest years of life. In knowing this, the most significant responsibility of governments is to intervene as soon as possible to lift children and their families out of disadvantage and prevent others from sliding into disadvantage. NZNO members are 'at the coalface' and need the support and resources required to achieve a positive impact.

Nāku noa nā

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² Ministry of Health <https://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/what-we-do/work-programme-2019-20/achieving-equity>

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