



Te Tāhū Hauora
Health Quality & Safety
Commission

Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission independent performance review report 2023 | Te arotakenga mahi motuhake a Te Tāhū Hauora 2023

External reviewers | Ngā kaiarotake ā-waho:

Dame Karen Poutasi

Darrin Sykes MNZM

Teresa Wall



Contents | Ngā ihirangi

Foreword He kupu takamua	4
Section 1: Background Wāhanga 1: Kōrero o mua	5
Purpose of the performance review	5
Performance review approach	5
Structure of the report	7
Section 2: Leading out with influence Wāhanga 2: Te arataki whakamana	8
The changed landscape	8
The unique and trusted position of Te Tāhū Hauora	9
The path forward	10
Section 3: Championing quality improvement Wāhanga 3: Te hāpai whakapai kounga	11
Exemplars of consumer engagement within programmes and development of the consumer code of expectations	11
Established leadership role in focusing on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and endorsing equity.....	11
Data and intelligence capacity and capability is a key strength and pivotal for the health sector.....	13
Mortality review continues to provide valuable insights.....	14
Maintains strong relationships across government and the sector and with consumers and whānau	14
Well-positioned to take a leadership role in the future and have a significant convening power	15
Successful in promoting and training people in quality improvement methodology with a focus on good patient care and safety	15
Section 4: Delivering on pae ora Wāhanga 4: Te whakatinanatanga.....	17
Clearly define and strengthen the visibility of its unique role and position in the reformed health system	17
Establish a clear evidence-based process to drive quality improvement prioritisation and initiatives	18
Advance from ‘shining the light’ to ‘leading out with influence’	18
Enhance capacity to translate evidence into action and close the loop.....	20
Build and improve its focus on the whole system	21
Shift Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori capability from rhetoric to action	21
Section 5: Recommendations Wāhanga 5: Ngā whakataua	23
Appendix 1: Question guidance for key stakeholder interviews Āpitihianga 1: Aratohu pātai mō ngā uiuitanga	25
Appendix 2: Agencies and organisations represented in interviews or focus groups Āpitihianga 2: Ngā pokapū me ngā rōpū i whakakanohitia ai i ngā uiuitanga me ngā rōpū whāiti	26
Appendix 3: Te Tāhū Hauora staff survey questions Āpitihianga 3: Ngā patapatai ki ngā kaimahi o Te Tāhū Hauora.....	27

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**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Foreword | He kupu takamua

Ma mua ka kite a muri, ma muri ka ora a mua

Those who lead give sight to those who follow; those behind give life to those ahead

Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission (Te Tāhū Hauora) has made considerable strides over the last few years to deliver on its goal of becoming a government agency that incorporates the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to lead in consumer and whānau engagement across the health sector.

The performance review clearly demonstrates the organisation's commitment to its goals and the proactive measures taken internally and externally to emphasise their focus on health quality improvement.

We strongly believe that Te Tāhū Hauora will continue to be a reliable and trusted resource and partner for the health sector and to provide high-quality analysis and quality improvement education and initiatives that meet the changing needs of the health system to improve health care for individuals, families and communities across the country.

The revised te reo Māori name of the organisation and the tohu set the stage for the vital role Te Tāhū Hauora plays in the reformed health system. The logo signifies the strength derived from the binding of the ridgepole, nurturing those who reside beneath its presence. It symbolises the organisation's steadfast support for the health sector and its dedication to its crucial role within the reformed system.

We encourage Te Tāhū Hauora to fully embrace the recommendations in this report and prominently assume its unique and independent leadership role in effecting positive and equitable change within the health sector.

Without deliberate action to prioritise equity as a key component of a quality health system, the default system inevitably leads to increased levels of inequity. Moreover, even when interventions are implemented, it is crucial to maintain sustained efforts and persistent pressure to prevent a reversion to the previous state.

We wish to acknowledge the strong foundation laid by former chief executive Dr Janice Wilson, who led Te Tāhū Hauora for over 10 years. Her exceptional leadership and commitment to equity was widely recognised and praised by health leaders and the staff. We extend our sincerest best wishes for her future endeavours.

We also warmly welcome Dr Peter Jansen as he steps into the role of chief executive. We are deeply encouraged by his appointment to lead the organisation in this next chapter to 'lead out with influence' towards responsiveness, effectiveness and equity, to deliver quality health care for all.



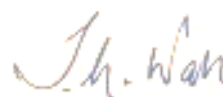
Dame Karen Poutasi

External reviewer



Darrin Sykes MNZM

External reviewer



Teresa Wall

External reviewer

Section 1: Background | Wāhanga 1: Kōrero o mua

In 2023, Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission (Te Tāhū Hauora) commissioned a shorter, limited independent review of their performance to follow-up on the direction they set within their Statement of Intent (SOI) 2020–24 and inform the development of their SOI 2023–27.

Purpose of the performance review

In 2019, Te Tāhū Hauora completed an extensive *Self-review report based on the Performance Improvement Framework* (PIF 2019)¹ to inform its Statement of Intent (SOI) 2020–24.² This work, along with the support and direction of the board of Te Tāhū Hauora, provided a strong foundation to place Te Tiriti o Waitangi and health equity even more strongly at the centre of their work.

The goal of this review is to assess how Te Tāhū Hauora can further enhance its value and contribution to improving the health system and advancing Māori health, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and health equity across government. This report details the process and the findings of the review.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to consider how Te Tāhū Hauora can build on its existing strengths and identify areas for improvement to deliver on its priorities in the reformed health system within the functions set for it under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 (Pae Ora Act).³

Ultimately, the purpose of the review is to identify recommendations that Te Tāhū Hauora can implement to support its role in delivering high-quality, accessible and equitable health services and outcomes for all.

Performance review approach

The approach taken for the 2019 performance review was based on the-then State Services Commission's PIF. As the external reviewers, we amended the last PIF-based self-review process in 2019, specifically to seek guidance on how Te Tāhū Hauora could best support the health system to advance Māori health, put Te Tiriti o Waitangi into practice and achieve health equity, alongside understanding other aspects of its performance.

The PIF is no longer used or required by the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. Therefore, rather than starting with a completely new approach, Te Tāhū Hauora built on the

¹ Health Quality & Safety Commission. 2021. *Self-review report based on the Performance Improvement Framework | Pūrongo arotake whaiaro i whai i te Anga Whakapiki Whakaaturanga*. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/self-review-report-based-on-the-performance-improvement-framework-purongorongorongo-arotake-whaiaro-i-whai-i-te-anga-whakapiki-whakaaturanga (accessed 19 June 2023).

² Health Quality & Safety Commission. 2021. *Tauāki Koronga | Statement of Intent 2020–24*. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/tauaki-koronga-statement-of-intent-202024 (accessed 19 June 2023).

³ Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022. URL: www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2022/0030/latest/LMS575405.html (accessed 19 June 2023).

previous process by inviting us, Dame Karen Poutasi,⁴ Darrin Sykes MNZM⁵ and Teresa Wall,⁶ to lead this review process to draw on our understanding of Te Tāhū Hauora.

Senior policy staff worked alongside us to determine our approach to the review. This included simplifying the question banks (now guidance) (see Appendix 1 for question guide) that we used for the 2019 review for both external stakeholders and Te Tāhū Hauora staff.

We engaged with key health leaders and stakeholders in mid-late March 2023 to assess how the organisation's efforts are viewed across the health sector and where and how they most need to focus their efforts over the next 4 years to guide health quality and safety in our reformed system. We conducted over 20 interviews and focus groups with more than 50 leaders from a wide range of organisations with an interest in health quality and safety. This included (but was not limited to) officials from the Accident Compensation Corporation, the Health and Disability Commissioner, Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health (Manatū Hauora), Pharmac, Te Aka Whai Ora Māori Health Authority (Te Aka Whai Ora), Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand (Te Whatu Ora), the Medical Council of New Zealand, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (see Appendix 2 for a full list of key health leaders and stakeholders).

The review also included feedback from Te Tāhū Hauora staff via an internal survey about how they have performed since the last review and what they believe their priorities need to be for the next 4 years (see Appendix 3 for survey questions).

The approach did not include seeking feedback from the health workforce, as we are mindful of the additional pressure that the last few years have placed on an already stretched workforce. Te Tāhū Hauora has previously sought real-time feedback over 2022 from the workforce and shared it with decision-makers at the time.

The review was completed within clear and tight parameters to align with the development of the SOI 2023–27 to ensure the feedback linked directly into this strategic document.

⁴ Dame Karen Poutasi is an experienced director, is currently on the board of Te Whatu Ora and chairs both Taumata Arowai and Kāpuhipuhi/Wellington Uni-Professional. She has held senior management roles in the public service, including as director-general of Health and most recently as chief executive of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Her background is as a medical practitioner, specialising in public health medicine.

⁵ Darrin Sykes MNZM JP CMInstD (Ngāti Rangitīhi and Ngāti Awa) is currently the deputy chief executive, organisational capability and services at the Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua. He was most recently the deputy chief executive, organisational services at the Office for Māori Crown Relations – Te Arawhiti. Darrin has worked in the Māori Crown relations space for over 20 years, including as chief executive, Crown Forestry Rental Trust; acting deputy secretary support services, Te Puni Kōkiri; and director, Waitangi Tribunal. Darrin has also held several directorships on governing boards, including as director and chair for a national sporting body for 23 years; Capital & Coast District Health Board government appointee 2010–19, where he was deputy chair and then chair of the finance, risk and audit committee; and Sport New Zealand board member government appointee 2013–20.

⁶ Teresa Wall (Te Rarawa, Te Aupōuri) started her professional life as a nurse specialising in renal care at Wellington regional hospital. She has spent many years as a health official working in central government, starting in a policy analyst role and progressing to being a member of the Ministry of Health executive team as the deputy director-general Māori health as well as serving for a short period as the deputy director-general of policy and strategy. Since leaving the Ministry of Health, as director of Wall Consultants she has focused on providing consultancy services to organisations to strengthen their Māori health and equity focus.

Structure of the report

This report is divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Background introduces the performance review, including its purpose, the approach taken and the structure of the report.

Section 2: Leading out with influence focuses on the new context in which Te Tāhū Hauora is operating and the key factors it is responding to, including the new legislation and what it requires of Te Tāhū Hauora.

Section 3: Championing quality improvement provides an overview of the feedback we received regarding the strengths of the organisation and the progress it has made.

Section 4: Delivering on pae ora discusses how well Te Tāhū Hauora is positioned to deliver in the reformed health system.

Section 5: Recommendations provides our recommendations for enhancing the unique and critical role of Te Tāhū Hauora within the health system reforms.

Finally, the three appendices set out question guidance for key stakeholder interviews, agencies and organisations represented in interviews or focus groups and staff survey questions, respectively.

Section 2: Leading out with influence | Wāhanga 2: Te arataki whakamana

In undertaking this review, we considered, **‘How can Te Tāhū Hauora further enhance its value and contribution to improving the health system and advancing Māori health, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and health equity across government within the reformed health system?’**

We also explored the opportunities and challenges for Te Tāhū Hauora leading out and influencing across the developing system and its structures.

The changed landscape

The COVID-19 pandemic and shortages in the health workforce have created challenges for an already stretched health system.

Since the enactment of the Pae Ora Act in mid-2022, the health system has experienced a substantial transformation, and the newly created system structures will take time to embed. The Pae Ora Act requires the health system to give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, to engage with consumers⁷ and whānau⁸ and to work for health equity. It also sets a clear and strong direction for health quality and safety.⁹

Within these changes, Te Tāhū Hauora has new partners in Te Aka Whai Ora, Te Whatu Ora, and Whaikaha, in addition to Manatū Hauora. Newly formed legislative pathways and requirements to engage with iwi and Māori, consumers and whānau and across localities and communities require new ways of working and new working relationships to be formed. Forming and strengthening these relationships will be key to delivering on the vision of the reforms.

We recognise these unique circumstances and demands. Our recommendations to Te Tāhū Hauora aim to optimise its readiness and effectiveness in assuming its pivotal role in driving positive change within the health system. By embracing these recommendations, Te Tāhū Hauora will be well equipped to navigate the evolving landscape, ultimately advancing improved health outcomes, equity and enhanced resilience in the face of future challenges.

We express our sincere appreciation for the time and valuable insights shared by those we interviewed. Additionally, we acknowledge Te Tāhū Hauora staff for their detailed and thoughtful responses, which greatly enriched our understanding. The feedback we received

⁷ Te Tāhū Hauora recognises there are many views about who a ‘health consumer’ is. ‘Consumer’ refers to anyone who has used, is currently using or is likely to use a health service. This includes but is not limited to individuals, community members, whānau and family, carers, patients and tangata whaiora. It includes voices of Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, migrants, refugees, rainbow communities and people living in rural areas.

⁸ The term ‘whānau’ can include the direct family group, the extended family group, the primary unit of support and, sometimes, friends with no kinship ties to other members. It is a concept that supports inclusive relationships between people. Whanaungatanga is an active expression of whānau, conveying connection and a sense of belonging through close relationships with each other. It is up to the consumer and those closest to them to communicate who is in their ‘whānau’. It is important that health staff never assume who is in or outside of the consumer’s whānau.

⁹ Health and Disability System Review. 2020. *Health and Disability System Review – Final Report – Pūrongo Whakamutunga*. Wellington: Health and Disability System Review. URL: www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/overview-health-system/health-and-disability-system-reforms/health-and-disability-system-review (accessed 20 April 2023).

demonstrated a remarkable level of engagement from staff and a passionate dedication to improving health outcomes.

It is evident that there is a genuine desire across the health sector and within Te Tāhū Hauora to prioritise the rights of Māori as tangata whenua and other groups disadvantaged by the health system, such as Pacific peoples and disabled people, and to find innovative ways to improve the delivery of quality and equitable health care services for all New Zealanders. We are encouraged by the passion and determination to work more effectively and drive meaningful improvements in the health sector.

The unique and trusted position of Te Tāhū Hauora

The value of Te Tāhū Hauora as a well-established organisation with a unique and trusted role in the health care system in Aotearoa New Zealand is unquestionable.

As the health system embeds the structures arising from the health system reform, the position of Te Tāhū Hauora remains vital, enabling it to make a significant impact on the future success of health care in the country. By leveraging its experience, expertise and resources, Te Tāhū Hauora can continue to play a critical role in driving positive change and promoting better health outcomes for all New Zealanders.

The new and enhanced functions entrusted to Te Tāhū Hauora under the Pae Ora Act serve as tangible evidence of the organisation's significant contribution to health quality and safety. This speaks to the strength and ability of Te Tāhū Hauora to 'shine a light' on what is happening in the system and provide evidence-based quality improvement initiatives and direction and support to the health sector to improve engagement with consumers and whānau.

Te Tāhū Hauora is now better able to speak out on issues within the health system that require attention. It is also well-positioned to examine and address significant system issues that may be difficult or subject to professional lock-down. Its role in providing quality monitoring and analysis is pivotal for the sector and widely recognised as a key strength.

With this unique perspective and ability to tackle complex problems, Te Tāhū Hauora has a critical role to play in the success of the health system by 'leading out with influence', providing leadership and guidance to the system, its services, workforce and consumers and their whānau.

The organisation is highly regarded in its ability to lead, coordinate and convene as a result of its track record of delivering trustworthy and evidence-based approaches and its continued monitoring of and reporting on quality, safety and equity issues.

Consistently, key leaders expressed their overwhelming agreement that Te Tāhū Hauora wields significant influence and credibility within the health sector and is widely recognised for fostering strong relationships across various government entities. Staff reiterated this feedback, saying that Te Tāhū Hauora has effectively built a foundation of goodwill and trust through the establishment of strong relationships and the delivery of evidence-based outputs, even in the absence of legislative power or authority to direct change within agencies or the wider health sector.

It is doing a good job of modelling partnership and supports the sector as a critical friend and ally, with a sincere intention to make positive and equitable improvements to the quality and safety of health care across the country. The neutrality and independence of Te Tāhū

Hauora from roles associated with delivery, commissioning, regulation and performance management¹⁰ is a significant strength that brings substantial benefits.

‘We need an outside voice and pair of eyes.’

Te Tāhū Hauora leads and supports the health sector and its workforce to understand that equity is central to quality and safety and that there is ‘no quality without equity’.¹¹ It places high priority on health care services being genuinely accessible and respecting and reflecting te ao Māori. By prioritising its role in the integration of te ao Māori into health care delivery, Te Tāhū Hauora aims to improve outcomes for Māori and promote greater equity across the health system. This includes taking a leading role to influence and focus on culturally safe care and as well as supporting initiatives that promote greater understanding and awareness of Māori knowledge, perspectives and values.

The credibility of Te Tāhū Hauora also allows it to tap into international progress and developments while maintaining an Aotearoa New Zealand context under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and building towards pae ora (healthy futures) for all New Zealanders.

‘Providing transparent and accessible health quality analysis is crucial to ensure that the health care system doesn’t take its eye off the ball.’

The path forward

While considerable progress has been made, substantial work remains for Te Tāhū Hauora to fully embed and apply the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi into its organisational practices and processes. This includes actively assisting the sector to pursue equitable outcomes for all groups and support and facilitate the system to become more centred on consumers and whānau.

We acknowledge that Te Tāhū Hauora is visually demonstrating its ongoing commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi with its newly gifted te reo Māori name, Te Tāhū Hauora, and tohu. It expresses its reinforced position to further honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and work to drive quality, safety and improvement across the health sector.

In the next section, we discuss the progress that Te Tāhū Hauora has made over the last 4 years and the opportunities that exist to enhance its contribution to the reformed health system.

¹⁰ Under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act, in the 2010 amendments.

¹¹ Health Quality & Safety Commission. 2017. *Quality improvement: no quality without equity?* Wellington: Health Quality & Safety Commission. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Our-data/Publications-resources/Quality-improvement-no-quality-without-equity.pdf (accessed 19 June 2023).

Section 3: Championing quality improvement | Wāhanga 3: Te hāpai whakapai kounga

In this section, we consider the acknowledged strengths of Te Tāhū Hauora and its progress over the 4 years since our previous review in its function to monitor the quality and safety of care in Aotearoa New Zealand and in facilitating cross-system sharing of intelligence to proactively identify and address quality and safety -related issues.

Exemplars of consumer engagement within programmes and development of the consumer code of expectations

Consumer and whānau engagement is a foundation of health quality and safety.

Te Tāhū Hauora is leading the way in building a system more strongly centred on consumers and whānau with a focus on modelling out to the sector. Its efforts to empower and amplify the voices of consumers and whānau have significantly expanded in recent years, particularly with the formalisation of its role in leading the sector to engage with consumers and whānau under the Pae Ora Act.

Stakeholder interviews and staff feedback indicated the substantial value and recognition of the strong and critical focus on championing consumer and whānau engagement across the health sector through implementing the requirements of the code of expectations for health entities' engagement with consumers and whānau.¹²

It was further evident in staff feedback that Te Tāhū Hauora is dedicated to incorporating the consumer voice into its activities and continuously improving its approach to integrating the patient perspective. The organisation recognises the importance of actively listening to consumer perspectives, and the consumer hub and consumer networks all play a vital role in the receiving and sharing of information.

Consumer engagement and co-design is highlighted as a significant contribution to the organisation's quality improvement education within the health system. This is only the beginning, as Te Tāhū Hauora is increasingly involving consumers and whānau from the outset and ensuring their active involvement in shaping the health care system.

Established leadership role in focusing on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and endorsing equity

Our advice to Te Tāhū Hauora in 2019 was to build its capacity and capability to embed and deliver on Te Tiriti o Waitangi as well as to set a clear strategy that placed equity at the centre of quality and safety. We can see that you have stood up to that challenge.

Te Tāhū Hauora has clearly prioritised and done well to build the knowledge and confidence of staff around Te Tiriti o Waitangi (with waiata, te reo classes and workshops), setting a high standard for other organisations to follow. This includes increasing its capability and

¹² Health Quality & Safety Commission. 2022. Te tikanga mō te mahi tahi a ngā hinonga hauora ki ngā kiritaki me ngā whānau | Code of expectations for health entities' engagement with consumers and whānau. Wellington: Health Quality & Safety Commission. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/consumer-hub/engaging-consumers-and-whanau/code-of-expectations-for-health-entities-engagement-with-consumers-and-whanau/ (accessed 19 June 2023).

capacity in addressing inequity within its data analysis and reporting. Its efforts to be open and direct about inequity and to promote credible voices in the sector are well recognised and reported in our discussions.

In our interviews and staff feedback, it was clear that the efforts of Te Tāhū Hauora demonstrate a significant commitment to promoting equity, in that Te Tāhū Hauora is being open and honest about addressing inequities and racism within the organisation and the wider sector with a focus on being a credible voice in the sector.

This includes:

- the establishment of the Māori health outcomes team, Ahuahu Kaunuku
- the establishment of the equity team, which focuses on the disability community and Pacific whānau: a promising initiative that shows a genuine intention to address inequities
- the transition from several to one national mortality review committee, which will provide greater flexibility to address areas of importance for Māori and inequity.

‘I think the intention is there, but we are still learning how to do this truly well. We need to go from good to great.’

While progress has been made to address equity and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi, focus is required to translate its principles into tangible actions and measures, to engage with Māori organisations to fulfil Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and to enhance outcomes for Māori. There is a clear focus on equity in reporting, with room for improvement for all areas of the health sector.

To establish an authentic partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Tāhū Hauora should prioritise integrating Te Tiriti o Waitangi across all its endeavours, with equity at the core. This requires clear prioritisation and action over rhetoric and translating initiatives into tangible results to advance Māori outcomes. Internally, Te Tāhū Hauora should reinforce its strategic leadership capability to forge partnerships with Māori providers while supporting the development of Māori strategic leadership. By championing and supporting the work of Māori providers, Te Tāhū Hauora can ensure that Māori voices and perspectives are included in decision-making processes and that their contributions are recognised and valued.

Overall, Te Tāhū Hauora must continue to work towards greater equity and partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi in all aspects of its work to ensure that it is truly prioritising and promoting equity for all.

‘If you get your partnerships right, then you will get far better quality.’

Data and intelligence capacity and capability is a key strength and pivotal for the health sector

The health quality intelligence function within Te Tāhū Hauora is a widely recognised strength. Its outstanding analytics capability and capacity enables comprehensive data analysis across a wide spectrum of issues. It performs a crucial role in this regard, serving as a central hub for analysing, reporting on and monitoring key quality and safety indicators (or markers) related to health quality, safety and improvement over time.

Several stakeholders highlighted the impactful public-facing infographics and sector-facing tools, including Window reports,¹³ Atlas of Healthcare Variation,¹⁴ medication review¹⁵ and the extensive patient experience surveys.¹⁶ Te Tāhū Hauora produced valuable case studies, such as the *COVID-19 care in the community system learning opportunities* report,¹⁷ which highlighted the exceptional efforts of the workforce and communities as they rallied together in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. It has also developed particularly helpful mental health data tools that make data accessible and enable comparisons across the country.

We were told that Te Tāhū Hauora has made significant advancements within its capability, developing tools that the health sector and consumers find useful, including interactive toolsets that pull together experience and data. It is actively working on a plan to further enhance these resources and their visibility.

Of note is the consumer engagement quality and safety marker, which seeks to answer the question, 'What does successful consumer and whānau engagement look like, and (how) does it improve the quality and safety of services?' This is world leading and helps to support the engagement of consumers and whānau at every level.

By providing a centralised point of access, Te Tāhū Hauora enables the health sector to make data-driven decisions and take proactive steps towards improving health outcomes for all. With trust and its high-quality evidence and data, Te Tāhū Hauora is well positioned to take a leadership role and have a significant convening power to drive policy change.

Te Tāhū Hauora should also shift its intelligence expertise from largely hospital settings towards providing support to localities, with a specific focus on enhancing health quality and safety in primary and community care settings (including risks in the transition of care from hospital to primary care). It must also continue to foster partnerships with iwi-Māori partnership boards. Te Tāhū Hauora must prioritise understanding the specific support and

¹³ Health Quality & Safety Commission. Te Kounga o te tauwhiro hauora | Window on the quality of health care. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-data/window-on-the-quality-of-health-care (accessed 19 June 2023). See: *A window on quality 2021: COVID-19 and impacts on our broader health system* – Part 1 and Part 2; and *Bula Sautu – A window on quality 2021: Pacific health in the year of COVID-19*.

¹⁴ Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission. 2021. Mapi Hauora Kē | Atlas of Healthcare Variation. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-data/atlas-of-healthcare-variation (accessed 19 June 2023).

¹⁵ Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission. (nd.) Ngā rongoā | Medicines. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-work/system-safety/reducing-harm/medicines (accessed 19 June 2023).

¹⁶ Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission. He ara aupiki, he ara auheke | Patient experience. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-data/patient-experience (accessed 19 June 2023).

¹⁷ Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission. 2023. *COVID-19 care in the community system learning opportunities | KŌWHEORI-19 he whai wāhi hei ako pūnaha manaaki i te hapori*. URL: www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/covid-19-care-in-the-community-system-learning-opportunities-kowheori-19-he-whai-wahi-hei-ako-punaha-manaaki-i-te-hapori (accessed 19 June 2023).

evidence needed to enable individuals, whānau and communities to have influence over the health services within their communities.

Mortality review continues to provide valuable insights

Mortality review holds a crucial role within the legislative functions of Te Tāhū Hauora, and feedback from various stakeholders and staff emphasised its ongoing provision of valuable insights and the intellectual rigour it brings.

The sector recognises the immense value of mortality review, expressed the need for its continuation and welcomed its strengthened function in upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They noted that the composition of the National Mortality Review Committee and the representation outlined in its terms of reference demonstrate a commitment to being an effective partner in upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of effectively disseminating and generating widespread interest in the findings and outputs. Moreover, the recent reform of the mortality review function was seen as a significant change that will broaden the scope of review, particularly concerning issues of inequity, providing greater agility and focus for more impact. This reform is expected to enhance transparency and accountability to the public, with a particular focus on enhancing the sector response to recommendations.

Maintains strong relationships across government and the sector and with consumers and whānau

The interviews revealed that Te Tāhū Hauora and its leadership are highly regarded by the sector and that the board of Te Tāhū Hauora is seen to bring a wealth of expertise and diverse perspectives, enhancing the organisation's capability and facilitating innovative thinking.

Te Tāhū Hauora has established strong relationships across government, enabling it to draw insights from international movements while remaining grounded in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. As such, it serves as a credible voice in the health care system and has the capability to raise concerns in critical areas when necessary.

‘Te Tāhū Hauora aims to work in a collaborative way and is well positioned to tackle difficult system issues that require a neutral view.’

Its role in assessing the system is vital, and its independence plays a crucial role in being a critical friend when highlighting areas of concern. Its neutrality and collaborative approach provide a valuable perspective on significant and challenging system issues, bringing an evidence-based viewpoint and offering a fresh pair of eyes.

The interviews and staff feedback highlighted a sense of uncertainty, and at times frustration, regarding the limited authority and mandate of Te Tāhū Hauora to enforce improvements across the sector. Many interviewees expressed the belief that the organisation should leverage its role to be more assertive and vocal in addressing quality and safety issues within the sector. There was unanimous agreement that the organisation's strength lies in its ability to influence change through supportive relationships.

Consequently, the organisation has an opportunity to enhance its influence, increase visibility and advocate more vigorously by using evidence to inform and strengthen policy and decision-making processes across various agencies within the health sector. This will be important in supporting Te Aka Whai Ora and Te Whatu Ora in their roles, as Te Tāhū Hauora can highlight issues where and when they emerge, so areas of risk and concern can be mitigated appropriately. It must also broaden and strengthen its relationships in the disability sector, including Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People, Māori providers, primary and community care and across the social sector. Te Tāhū Hauora should think about the risks inherent in major transformation and promote applicable solutions.

Well-positioned to take a leadership role in the future and have a significant convening power

Within the health system reforms, it is important that Te Tāhū Hauora continues in its supportive capacity. Yet, under the Pae Ora Act, it can take more of a directive role through its expanded function to make recommendations.

Furthermore, stakeholders expressed that Te Tāhū Hauora holds significant convening power. This is most recently evident in the National Quality Forum,¹⁸ which is gaining momentum, and acting on important issues.

Te Tāhū Hauora is a credible voice in the health care system and can escalate areas of concern when necessary. It is well positioned to take a leadership role, with a focus on good patient care and safety. It should continue to build its role within the National Quality Forum and to expand the scope to ensure that the decision-making is evidence based and driving equity.

‘We are uniquely positioned to influence outcomes for our population, with some extremely experienced people with significant knowledge of the sector.’

Successful in promoting and training people in quality improvement methodology with a focus on good patient care and safety

Te Tāhū Hauora has played a significant and successful role in promoting, and educating the health workforce in, quality improvement methodology at the grassroots level, with a shift from a traditional safety-focused approach (focus on what goes wrong) to a more resilient one (focus on what goes right).

The education programmes are now heavily focused on addressing inequity and applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi in practice. Quality improvement science is highly valued by Te Tāhū Hauora and leads the health workforce development in quality improvement. Its role in this is acknowledged across the sector.

¹⁸ The National Quality Forum is a collaboration with other entities to achieve health gains. The National Quality Forum brings together key national agencies and key stakeholder representatives to share and discuss ‘soft intelligence’ and analysed information on issues of concern about the quality and safety of the system from across the sector.

As a result, the pool of individuals who have received training in this area has increased. We understand that Te Tāhū Hauora aim to expand this training further, equipping more people to effectively implement quality and safe practices.

Te Tāhū Hauora has the opportunity to increase the health sector's awareness of its education programmes while continuing to support the workforce in understanding and delivering quality improvement across the country.

Section 4: Delivering on pae ora | Wāhanga 4: Te whakatinanatanga

In this section, we consider how well Te Tāhū Hauora is positioned to contribute to the vision of pae ora (healthy futures) for all New Zealanders and address the persisting and emerging health issues and inequities within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Key leaders and staff consistently acknowledged the commendable efforts of Te Tāhū Hauora over the last few challenging years. They also provided valuable constructive criticism and advice, noting areas where clearer positioning and stronger, more robust and actionable commitments are required. Below is an overview of the feedback provided.

Clearly define and strengthen the visibility of its unique role and position in the reformed health system

Many sector leaders acknowledged the accomplishments and valuable work of Te Tāhū Hauora. However, some expressed uncertainty and concern about the lack of role clarity for Te Tāhū Hauora within the reformed health sector in the context of changed distribution of functions for new and existing agencies.

Te Tāhū Hauora should strive to enhance its visibility and clarify its role as a prominent leader in the health sector. There is a significant opportunity for Te Tāhū Hauora to amplify its voice and increase its recognition to fulfil its potential more effectively.

It is essential that the distinct contributions and responsibilities of Te Tāhū Hauora in system leadership, surveillance and data analysis are more precisely defined by the organisation itself and widely recognised and understood by the wider health sector and the public. By increasing its visibility as a trusted evidence-based and neutral organisation, Te Tāhū Hauora can more effectively communicate its purpose and advocate for necessary changes.

‘Te Tāhū Hauora needs to be more vocal and be a voice on the big issues.’

Many expressed that Te Tāhū Hauora needs to be more assertive and courageous in calling out specific issues and risks in the system.

Te Tāhū Hauora plays a vital role in speaking out loudly about significant issues and applying pressure on the system to drive health quality improvements while maintaining its role as a friend to the sector through its strong relationships and convening power. This entails identifying and amplifying key quality and safety concerns across the broader issues of health when quality and safety issues are not adequately being addressed or there is unnecessary harm within the health system.

Although this involves navigating the landscape with wisdom and understanding, by doing so, Te Tāhū Hauora will reinforce its independence and reaffirm its role in supporting an independent position within the system, as established by legislation.

Establish a clear evidence-based process to drive quality improvement prioritisation and initiatives

Te Tāhū Hauora must establish a well-defined and evidence-based process to drive the prioritisation and implementation of quality improvement initiatives within the organisation. This approach is crucial to ensure that all areas of Te Tāhū Hauora are aligned in their efforts, speaking collectively with one voice.

During our interviews, it became evident that many stakeholders were uncertain about how Te Tāhū Hauora approaches or prioritises incoming work and determines its focus for areas of deep dive.

A great deal of feedback from staff members emphasised the lack of transparency or clear process in the organisation's prioritisation of its work or initiatives, especially regarding Māori health or equity, noting that an existing framework is not used effectively.

In addition, several staff members placed strong emphasis on the importance of incorporating mortality review findings into the decision-making processes of Te Tāhū Hauora to drive areas for quality improvement initiatives and prioritise actions, both within Te Tāhū Hauora and to champion throughout the sector.

To address this issue, staff highlighted that a structured process, with transparent mechanisms and criteria, should be established to ensure that Māori health and health equity are given the necessary attention and resources. The outstanding needs of specific population groups are clearly evidenced by data, and Māori, Pacific and disabled people and LGBTTQIA+ populations do not have equitable health outcomes.

Given the growing size of the organisation, it is imperative that the leadership and staff of Te Tāhū Hauora have clear guidelines and rationale for its focus areas, and that Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity are prioritised across all aspects of the organisation, from its day-to-day activities to its long-term initiatives.

'If it's not focused on equity, we shouldn't be doing it.'

This includes the need for Te Tāhū Hauora to establish a well-defined framework and action plan to advance its strategic priorities, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and health equity, and evaluate its progress to ensure accountability.

Advance from 'shining the light' to 'leading out with influence'

Te Tāhū Hauora has achieved notable success in 'shining the light' and raising awareness; however, feedback emphasised the importance of going beyond simply highlighting problems. Shifting the focus towards implementation, rather than relying solely on retrospective reviews, will allow Te Tāhū Hauora to take proactive steps to drive improvements in the health sector.

'They can add significant value by proactively looking at information and evidence, rather than looking just [at], or waiting for mistakes to happen and then fixing it.'

This proactive and collaborative stance was seen as a valuable position for Te Tāhū Hauora to assume within the reformed health system. A critical need for Te Tāhū Hauora to support the new agencies to bridge the gap between identification and implementation was also identified. This will require a stronger commitment and partnership process to ensure that recommendations can be effectively translated into practical initiatives that work and that evidence-based solutions are implemented appropriately to bring about tangible improvements in the health care system.

‘Change is an emotional space. It requires a whitiwhiti kōrero (support and advice) platform to empowering individuals to return as champions within organisations.’

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of working alongside Te Tāhū Hauora to learn and share insights and evidence-based solutions and develop approaches that will work within the context.

‘Merely highlighting problems is no longer enough. We have delivered on “shining a light”, but what is the next step? It is essential to take decisive and actionable steps to address the issues.’

Staff reiterated these, raising concerns about the lack of implementation across the health sector and the failure of Te Tāhū Hauora to follow through on evidence-based solutions or recommendations. This was particularly evident in feedback from mortality review. Despite the wealth of recommendations provided by these reviews, there has been a perceived failure to effectively act upon them and implement necessary changes.

This requires stronger links between data reports, policy development and implementation when making recommendations to translate them into practical initiatives. Te Tāhū Hauora should strengthen its collaboration and partnership with relevant agencies or recipients of recommendations. To strengthen this connection, it is crucial to engage at an earlier stage in the process. This allows for shared understanding, collective action and mutual accountability, enhancing the likelihood of successful implementation and sustained improvement and better health outcomes for all.

In line with this approach, stakeholders and staff further recognised the potential for Te Tāhū Hauora to expand its work programmes and assume a leadership role in quality improvement projects across the health sector. They highlighted the importance of collaboration, suggesting partnerships with other agencies such as Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora, including primary and community care, to drive national-level initiatives resulting in more significant progress than individual projects carried out by separate hospitals or regions.

‘This shift would allow for a more proactive approach in addressing key issues and making a tangible impact on pressing health concerns.’

Undoubtedly, strengthening collaboration with the relevant agencies and recipients of recommendations at an earlier stage requires prioritised investment of time and resources.

Enhance capacity to translate evidence into action and close the loop

As recognised above, Te Tāhū Hauora needs to build its capacity and capability to translate evidence into action and effectively influence agencies to implement recommendations and close the loop.

Closing the loop in recommendation-making refers to the process of receiving feedback or user interactions on the recommendations provided and using that feedback to improve future recommendations. It is critical that, once a report or data is released, its impact and success is measured to indicate whether improvements are being implemented, the risks or issues are being mitigated and their intended impact is being realised. Consumer and whānau engagement is integral to this.

‘Te Tāhū Hauora needs to lead the health sector to learn what has worked and keep the pedal on it!’

Te Tāhū Hauora should work closely with Te Aka Whai Ora to provide robust information in its reports and recommendations, particularly to support Māori and Pacific peoples. Such collaboration can help influence Te Whatu Ora and standardise the pathways for and implementation of recommendations. *Bula Sautu – A window on quality 2021: Pacific health in the year of COVID-19*¹⁹ was noted as a valuable snapshot and deep dive, and its recommendations were taken up as part of the system review work. This provides a mechanism to close the loop with recommendation-making.

Stakeholders, including staff, also raised concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the direct impact and measurement of outcomes from projects. This ambiguity creates uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of the organisation’s initiatives. To address this concern, Te Tāhū Hauora should make it a priority to provide greater clarity in demonstrating the tangible results of its projects and how they contribute to improving the overall health system. This may involve developing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms internally to track the progress and outcomes of initiatives.

Te Tāhū Hauora holds a leading role in actively engaging with the community, whānau and individual voices within the health sector. This commitment to meaningful interaction allows us to not only gather valuable insights but also to measure the effectiveness of projects in addressing the specific needs and aspirations of whānau and their wider communities.

An understanding of the unique challenges and aspirations of different communities provides a vital feedback loop that allows the health system to measure the impact of its health services in real time.

¹⁹ Health Quality & Safety Commission. 2021. *Bula Sautu – A window on quality 2021: Pacific health in the year of COVID-19* | *Bula Sautu – He mata kounga 2021: Hauora Pasifika i te tau COVID-19*. Wellington: Health Quality & Safety Commission. URL: <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/bula-sautu-a-window-on-quality-2021-pacific-health-in-the-year-of-covid-19-bula-sautu-he-mata-kounga-2021-hauora-pasifika-i-te-tau-covid-19> (accessed 19 June 2023).

Build and improve its focus on the whole system

A notable observation from our interviews was the need for Te Tāhū Hauora to broaden its focus to encompass the whole system by strengthening its relationships with new and existing parts of the system to drive improved outcomes: specifically, to deepen its understanding of primary and community health to serve and support equitable health care.

Establishing and building relationships to provide support to iwi-Māori partnership boards, localities, primary and community health care providers and communities is crucial for Te Tāhū Hauora in broadening its understanding of the quality and safety issues faced by Māori and Pacific peoples and disabled individuals and others who experience inequitable outcomes.

Te Tāhū Hauora plays a valuable role in sharing information about changes that can be made in real time to improve quality and safety. It is important to support these parts of the health system with meaningful and actionable health quality intelligence to inform their design and decision-making processes. Increased promotion, access and real-time reporting of health quality intelligence, such as the Atlas of Healthcare Variation and the patient experience surveys, are just as valuable locally in decision-making as they are nationally.

Many stakeholders also highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of the maternity sector, including Kahu Taurima,²⁰ and across long-term conditions, emphasising the value of Te Tāhū Hauora having greater involvement in these areas.

Shift Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori capability from rhetoric to action

As outlined earlier, Te Tāhū Hauora needs to continue its journey to underpin its operating model with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, prioritise and pursue equity for all groups and support a system that is more centred on consumers and whānau to support and facilitate system improvement.

Most external stakeholders commended Te Tāhū Hauora on its leadership in promoting Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity; however, staff and some external stakeholders highlighted several key areas for improvement that need to be embedded within the organisation.

These areas include the visibility of a robust and clear operating model that is seen to deliberately embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Executive leadership and Māori leadership need to be cohesive and support individuals and teams in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi enactment. On the other hand, building internal capability must not divert attention from addressing the even more challenging aspects of embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in work programmes to push towards improving outcomes for Māori and other populations with inequitable health outcomes.

This dual challenge highlights the need for processes and systems that assess how governance, leadership, individuals and their teams meaningfully and practically apply the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the strategic direction, work programmes, prioritisation, decision-making and commissioning, partnerships and accountability of the organisation.

²⁰ Kahu Taurima is the joint Te Aka Whai Ora and Te Whatu Ora approach to maternity and early years (pre-conception to five years old, or the 'First 2000 days of life') for all whānau in Aotearoa New Zealand. See: www.teakawhiora.nz/our-work/kahu-taurima (accessed 19 June 2023).

‘There is a movement across Te Tāhū Hauora to be on the front foot – it has one sock pulled up – not sure if the other sock is on yet.’

The solution lies in recognising the need to assist the sector by bridging the gap between rhetoric and action. The feedback highlighted that, although there has been a significant shift in the culture within Te Tāhū Hauora, the key concern is whether this change translates into tangible actions and meaningful change in addressing inequities. Cultural change, although important, without effective implementation will not be sufficient to bring about the desired outcomes and equitable relationships with the sector. It is critical that staff clearly understand their role and function and how they should and can embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity approaches into those.

Within the Whāinga Amorangi work programme, there is a need and opportunity to expand the focus to enhance the organisation’s capacity and capability in critical policy and equity analysis.

‘If the commission is serious about equity, then it needs to increase capacity.’

To achieve this, it is essential to prioritise workforce development and support individuals in understanding what this means in their day-to-day roles, while recognising the skills needed to achieve the objectives. Concurrently, the organisation should continue building cultural capability within its staff, as per Section 14 of the Public Services Act 2020,²¹ to develop and maintain the capability of the public service to engage with Māori and to understand Māori perspectives.

Further feedback noted that Māori staff are expected to fulfil numerous roles within the organisation. Recognising their skills and influence, creating safe environments for Māori and Pacific peoples to work and thrive in leadership positions is also crucial. The governance and leadership must prioritise this aspect.

²¹ See: www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0040/latest/LMS356875.html (accessed 19 June 2023).

Section 5: Recommendations | Wāhanga 5: Ngā whakatau

To strengthen its value and impact in improving the health system by advancing Māori health, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and health equity across government within the reformed health system, we recommend that Te Tāhū Hauora takes a proactive and influential leadership role in driving positive and equitable improvement to:

‘Lead out with influence’

Leading out with influence requires Te Tāhū Hauora to go beyond traditional leadership approaches and actively engage with other stakeholders, both within and outside the health system, to support and guide the success of the health reforms. By doing so, the organisation can champion and deliver evidence-based approaches that prioritises Māori health and address health inequities.

The organisation should leverage its expertise, knowledge and influence to drive systemic change, promote collaboration and ensure that Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and health equity are embedded at every level, both internally and throughout the reformed health system.

To achieve this, we recommend that Te Tāhū Hauora:

1. **visibly prioritises and embeds Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity** in order to be an exemplar of continuous quality improvement in all aspects of the work of Te Tāhū Hauora
2. **clarifies and promotes the unique independent and trusted role of Te Tāhū Hauora within the reformed health sector** so the quality and safety of services are always seen through an equity lens
3. **continues to enhance critical thinking capability and capacity to support the wider health sector’s use of evidence to deliver on health sector principles** to ensure the public health, primary and community, hospital and specialist services are focused on quality and safety
4. **expands on its leading position in consumer and whānau engagement within the health sector through its engagement with leaders** so the new code of expectations for consumer and whānau engagement is understood and implemented
5. **collaborates and influences the spectrum of partnerships envisaged by the pae ora legislation** so any recommendations made are understood, owned and implemented
6. **builds on, constantly reviews and strengthens what success will look like** so the insights gained from evaluation and feedback mechanisms allow Te Tāhū Hauora to refine and enhance its performance.

Our recommendations emphasise the importance of Te Tāhū Hauora having a strong and influential role within the health sector and with the public. The organisation should leverage its expertise, knowledge and influence to drive systemic changes, promote collaboration and ensure that Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and health equity are embedded at every level, both within the organisation and throughout the reformed health system.

We believe that, by incorporating these recommendations, Te Tāhū Hauora can successfully lead and guide the reformed health system to prioritise equity, accessibility and improved outcomes for all.

Appendix 1: Question guidance for key stakeholder interviews | Āpitianga 1: Aratohu pātai mō ngā uiuitanga

Question category: Strategic vision and health system role

1. Overall, since 2020, how well has the Commission performed in its work toward health quality? and supported health sector improvement? *Idea: Does quality drive the Commission's work? Do you believe the Commission's function as a quality leader has benefited the health sector from 2020 through health system transformation? How?*
2. As a Crown agency, how well is the Commission responding to its Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities? *Idea: Do you feel the Commission has the capability and culture to action its Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities and aspirations?*
3. How effectively does the Commission generate common ownership and genuine collaboration within its work?
4. How can the Commission best support your organisation?

Question category: The Commission's role in improved quality, safety and experience of care

5. Which areas of work do you see as the Commission's strengths, in influencing improvement in health quality? (some examples are included below)
 - Consumer and whānau participation
 - Encouraging and embedding Māori world views and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as central to health quality in New Zealand
 - Encouraging health equity-based thought and practice that is appropriate and responsive to differing needs
 - Encouraging and supporting systems and processes which support health quality, safety and equity
 - Quality data and reporting
 - Quality improvement education and training
 - Interagency collaboration for health quality
 - Reporting learning from mortality review.

Question category: The Commission's role in population health

6. How well does the Commission advance quality improvement priorities to benefit Māori? and to achieve health equity?

Question category: Best value for public health system resources

7. Over the past five years, how could the Commission have worked or focused differently to increase its value and/or impact on health quality?
8. Overall, what does the Commission most need to focus on, over the next five years, to improve its value as a health quality leader?

Appendix 2: Agencies and organisations represented in interviews or focus groups | Āpitihanga 2: Ngā pokapū me ngā rōpū i whakakanohitia ai i ngā uiuitanga me ngā rōpū whāiti

Accident Compensation Commission

Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission

Health and Disability Commissioner

Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health

Te Aka Whai Ora | Māori Health Authority

Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand

Medical Council of New Zealand

Ministry for Pacific Peoples

Pacific Peoples *Bula Sautu* report expert advisory representatives

Pharmac

Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners

Appendix 3: Te Tāhū Hauora staff survey questions | Āpitihanga 3: Ngā patapatai ki ngā kaimahi o Te Tāhū Hauora

The Health Quality & Safety Commission (the Commission) has a mission to ‘*Involve. Inform. Influence. Improve.*’ and a vision of ‘*Quality health for all.*’

This survey seeks your views on how we have performed since 2020 and what our priorities need to be for the next four years.

1. Which areas of work do you see as the Commission’s strengths, in influencing improvement in health quality?
 - Consumer and whānau participation
 - Encouraging and embedding Māori world views and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as central to health quality in New Zealand
 - Encouraging health equity-based thought and practice that is appropriate and responsive to differing needs
 - Encouraging and supporting systems and processes which support health quality, safety and equity
 - Quality data and reporting
 - Quality improvement education and training
 - Interagency collaboration for health quality
 - Reporting learning from mortality review
 - Other? (*Free text*)
2. Overall, since 2020, do you agree that the Commission has performed well in its work toward health quality? and supported health sector improvement? *Free text section included.*
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree
3. What do you think the Commission does well? What are the unique resources we can draw on? What do others see as our strengths?
4. How well does the Commission advance quality improvement priorities to benefit Māori? and to achieve health equity?
5. Do you agree that as a Crown agency, up to now, the Commission is responding well to its Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities? *Free text section included.*
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree

6. Do you agree the Commission has the capability and culture to action its Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities and aspirations in the future?
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree
7. Over the past four years, how could the Commission have worked or focused differently to increase its value and/or impact on health quality? What could improve? Where do we have fewer resources than others? What are others likely to see as our weaknesses?
8. Overall, what does the Commission most need to focus on, over the next four years, to improve its value as a health quality leader? What opportunities are open to us? What trends could we take advantage of? How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?