



16 October, 2011

Government Administration Committee
Parliament
WELLINGTON

Tēnā koutou

Crown Entities Reform Bill

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation welcomes this very brief opportunity to comment on the Crown Entities Reform Bill. As the leading professional and industrial organisation for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 45 000 members, we have a strong interest in organisational changes in the health sector which will *positively* affect health outcomes. Change is often disruptive and in health, continuity of care is paramount for safety.

We have consulted member groups and our professional, policy and research advisers, but have not had time to fully consider the implications of all aspects of the Bill. Accordingly we offer the following brief response but respectfully request that we are kept informed and will have the opportunity to contribute to further development of the work of these agencies.

Health Promotion Agency

Nurses, who comprise over half the health workforce, are largely responsible for the *delivery* of health care. Public health nurses, Plunket and tamariki ora nurses, school nurses, primary health care nurses, and district nurses in particular are integral to the development and implementation of health promotion and health literacy programmes which this legislation will affect.

In view of the significant impact of alcohol on health in this country, we strongly support the retention of the industry contribution to, and advisory function of, the Alcohol Advisory Committee in the new Health Promotion agency.

Mental Health

The early disestablishment of the Mental Health Commission has come as a surprise and we are not sanguine that the reasons for it being set up as a

separate entity no longer exist. Most District Health Boards have not met the quality and service provision requirements set out in the *Blueprint for Mental Health Services* over a decade ago, with current workforce and service gaps extending well beyond those relating to the transition from institutional to community-based care. In particular, timely access to safe and appropriate primary mental health care is essential to reduce future demand from an increasingly aging and socio-economically diverse population. We trust that there will be no loss of focus, or funding, by integrating mental health services, rather than utilising the dedicated resources of the MHC.

Mental Health Commissioner

We strongly support the role of Mental Health Commissioner (MHC) but have doubts about whether this role fits comfortably within the Health and Disability Commissioner's office. While both are 'public watchdogs' to some extent, the MHC has a broad auditing and advisory role overseeing the mental health sector on behalf of the public, while the HDC investigates individual complaints. The funding and resource needs of the two roles are quite different, and we recommend that these differences are recognised and factored in during the implementation planning phase.

Finally, please note that NZNO would like to be kept informed of and contribute to the development of health promotion and mental health service and workforce plans. NZNO can offer the experience and expertise of our professional nurse advisers, and members of the specialist Mental Health Nurses Section and other Colleges and Sections.

Nāku noa, nā



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ABOUT NZNO

NZNO is the leading professional and industrial organisation for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 45 000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on a range of employment-related and professional issues. Te Runanga o Aotearoa comprises our Māori membership and is the arm through which our Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership is articulated.

NZNO provides leadership, research and support for professional excellence in nursing, negotiates collective employment agreements on behalf of its members

and collaborates with government and other agencies throughout the health sector. Nurses are the largest group of health professionals comprising half the health workforce.

The NZNO vision is “Freed to care, Proud to nurse”. Our members enhance the health and wellbeing of all people of Aotearoa New Zealand and are united in their professional and industrial aspirations to achieve a safe, sustainable and accessible system of public health care for all New Zealanders.