



Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa
NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION

New Zealand College of Primary Health Care Nurses AGM – 9 March 2026

NZNO Professional Nursing Adviser's Report

Tēnā koutou katoa, greetings to you all. Thank you for the opportunity to present the NZNO Professional Nursing Advisor report at this AGM.

I would like to thank the committee members for the dedication and hard work they have put in over the last year. Tracey has tirelessly promoted the College within her circle of influence, including to GP leadership groups, as well as frequently speaking to the media. She continues to raise the profile of primary healthcare nurses and their mahi. Thanks also to the Chairs of the two subcommittees: Bridget (Professional Practice Committee) who has been active in organising the symposium, which will be held in October this year. LOGIC editor Jess (as well as former Editor Yvonne) and her team continues to produce the high-quality LOGIC journal.

Committee changes and support for new committee members:

A number of committee members are stepping down in 2026. We are hoping at this AGM to be able to announce new committee members! Support for new committee members will be provided by the outgoing committee and myself. The College & Section Handbook has been updated, providing helpful guidance on committee activities and is now available online. NZNO also holds annual College & Section induction and education days for committee members to attend, which are fully funded by NZNO. Committee members are also eligible for Employment Related Education Leave (EREL) to attend.

Key updates related to NZ healthcare (with focus on primary healthcare)

Establishment of the Primary Care Advisory Group [Primary Care Advisory Group](#). The aim is to maximise the contribution of primary care within the New Zealand health system, supporting the Government's focus on ensuring Kiwis have access to timely, quality health care. The group provides independent advice to the Minister of Health on matters relating to primary care priorities, supporting the strategic and long-term vision for primary care. The focus is initially on general practice, but over time the group hopes to have a broader focus on healthcare delivery in community settings. Unfortunately, there are currently no nurses or Māori members on this group, but Chair Tracey is in close communication with the Secretary.

Improving access to primary care: implementation of a new national target – for more than 80% of people to access an appointment with a general practice provider within one week. This is supported by \$285 million in performance-based funding over three years for general practices to improve access, including potential for extended hours and e-consults. A new National Primary Care Dataset is being created to track this target.

Establishment of a health workforce committee: to provide advice to the Minister on matters relating to the health workforce priorities, current and emerging risks and issues, and to support the strategic and long-term vision of the health workforce. For more information: [MOH Health workforce committee](#)

Workforce Support: Government investments include training for 150 more GPs and 300 more Nurse Practitioners by 2028. Health NZ has opened funding to recruit new graduate registered nurses, offering up to \$15,000 for urban and \$20,000 for rural employers delivering primary healthcare services (including aged care; GPs; NGOs; Rural providers/hospitals; Hauora Māori and Pacific partners; home & community support). All providers must employ at least one RN who has completed preceptor training. For more information: [New Graduate funding](#)

24/7 Digital Care: A 24/7 online GP service is now available to provide virtual consultations.

Funding Reform: From 1 July 2026, the funding formula for general practices will be updated to include age, sex, morbidity, rurality, and deprivation, with \$95 million in additional annual funding provided to support these changes. [Capitation reweighting | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

Pharmacy changes: Legislation is changing to allow pharmacists with prescribing rights to own or have an interest in pharmacies, improving access to medication. Prescription length can also be extended to 12 months, for patients with stable long-term conditions.

Other areas under review:

Healthy Futures Amendment Bill - [Pae Ora Amendment bill](#)

Medical Products Bill [Medical products bill](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy [MH and wellbeing strategy](#)

Child and Youth Mental Health Study. [Child Youth Mental Health study](#)

Other useful updates: [Nursing Council Annual Report 2025: Upholding standards for safe, effective care](#) – information about the Council’s achievements, priorities, and vision for the future of nursing in New Zealand. Includes workforce data; updated Scopes and Standards of competence; changes to internationally qualified nurses applications/training; information about NP and Nurse Prescriber practice; etc.

NZNO updates

CE Paul Goulter continues to provide updates in the membership newsletters, here is a summary of some of the recent NZNO activities:

NZNO new Constitution – this was voted in at the 2025 NZNO AGM and sets out new structures and processes, with an underlying dynamic of biculturalism. At an operational level the logistics for the membership groups are still being worked out.

Primary Health Care MECA: This is a huge piece of work for NZNO, with a variety of hundreds of employers (large and small) and covering more than 3500 members nationwide. The negotiations are complicated as employers are represented by up to four teams of advocates and are also able to self-represent at the table, giving multiple priorities and points of view for NZNO to navigate, in order to negotiate the best outcome for members. Members will be surveyed in the next couple of months to provide feedback on the claims they want to put forward. A bargaining team of delegates is being formed in time for initiation of bargaining, which will commence around May.

Pay Equity: The coalition Government’s amendments to the Equal Pay act were made without proper consultation or democratic process. There were many cancelled NZNO claims in Primary healthcare, affecting 6500 members. In August 2025, NZNO along with two other unions, made submissions to the People’s Select Committee for the care and support pay equity claim, outlining the negative effect on members, families, patient and health outcomes.

Additionally, a claim has been lodged with the High Court, arguing that the amendments breach three fundamental rights in the NZ Bill of Rights Act: freedom from gender-based pay discrimination, the right to natural justice, and the right to fair legal process. For more information: [Pay Equity](#). Pay equity claims are underway for Hospice and Plunket, under the revised legislation.

Patient Voice Aotearoa petition: Malcolm Muholland, Chair of advocacy group Patient Voice Aotearoa, travelled around New Zealand, hearing people's experiences of their local health services and collecting signatures for a petition, which calls upon the Government to:

- Fix the health crisis.
- Address disparities for Māori, rural and low-income communities.
- Allocate enough resources to train, recruit and retain more nurses, doctors, specialists, midwives, health-care assistants and other health workers.
- Meet its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and protect Māori health, in consultation with iwi and hapu. This petition will be presented to Parliament on 18 November.

Please do sign and share this with your contacts. [NZNO Patient Voice Aotearoa Petition](#)

Te Whatu Ora Industrial action: NZNO members have been involved in recent strikes and signalling dissatisfaction with unsafe staffing and other concerns. NZNO continues with the protracted bargaining process with Te Whatu Ora. Pay remains a significant barrier to settlement, with Te Whatu Ora's current position not meeting members claim for a wage increase that meets increases to the cost of living.

Staffing Ratios: NZNO continues to explore what nurse-patient ratios may look like in different nursing sectors and the feasibility of implementing mandated ratios. Nurse-to-patient ratio legislation has markedly improved recruitment and retention in USA, Australia and Canada.

HCA workforce: NZNO is working with HCAs from different sectors, to explore concerns about inconsistent training and career pathway options. Their aim is to have consistent training and remuneration for all HCAs wherever they work and national stepping stones for HCAs who may want to become enrolled or registered nurses.

Age Safe Campaign: this campaign aims to address the issues caused by chronic understaffing in aged care facilities, which impacts both staff and residents. There is an urgent need to ensure adequate funding for equitable, high-quality care. NZNO published an Aged Care Whānau Impact Report in 2025, which includes survey responses and interviews with staff and collated workplace incidents around staffing and quality of care. The report can be found here: [Age Safe - Maranga Mai](#)

News from NZNO Professional Services team:

Support and Education: As well as engaging in the above projects, the PNA team continue to provide professional advice, support and representation to members. Education and workshops can also be provided at workplaces, tailored according to the issues or changes occurring at your worksite. If you would like a PNA to meet with you or your team please contact NZNO to be put in touch with the PNA for your region.

We also have updated the list of professional supervisors across the motu: [NZNO Supervision](#)

Nursing Council review of Scopes of Practice & Code of Conduct: Professional Nursing Advisors have participated in these reviews. We encourage all members to educate themselves about the changes and implications for their practice, including what this might mean for you as you update your PDRP and APC. NCNZ Link: [Practising as a nurse](#)

Government proposals: NZNO Policy Team has recently submitted collated member feedback to Nursing Council on the draft Code of Conduct. Last year NZNO provided feedback on a number of consultations including the Ministry of Health “Putting patients first: modernising health workforce regulation”. This bill has the potential to disrupt how the health workforce is educated and how health care services are provided.

2026 Medico-Legal forum: Planning has commenced for this forum, which will be held in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in July. More details will be shared as planning progresses. There will also be an option to join remotely if unable to attend in person.

In summary – it has been a busy year, and I would like to extend my appreciation to all of you working under pressure in our health system. It has been another year of challenges and frustration for the health workforce.

My thanks again to all the committee. The Committee represents you as members and ultimately aims to promote excellence of nursing practice within primary healthcare. It has been a pleasure to continue to work with such a dedicated team and I look forward to what the next year holds.

Ngā mihi

Cathy Leigh, Professional Nursing Advisor

**“Kāhore taku toa I te toa takitahi, he toa takitini”
We cannot succeed without the support around us**