

11.12.2019

Ms Louisa Wall
Chairperson,
Health Select Committee
Parliament Buildings,

Talofa lava Louisa and Committee Members,

I write with wholehearted support for this bill (probably not a surprise haha).

Thank you for what each of you are doing, and what we are seeing from your Parliamentary colleagues to address a deep call in He Ara Oranga from people all across Aotearoa;

“In closing, we respond to the call we heard from people up and down the country for a collective and enduring political commitment to improved mental health and wellbeing in New Zealand. Mental health is too important to be a political football. Although different parties have differing priorities, we believe they all share a commitment to improved mental health and wellbeing in New Zealand.”¹

I deeply appreciated listening to many of you, and your colleagues speak in the first reading, and how this call is being honoured, especially in ways such as through the ‘Cross Party Group on Mental Health and Addictions Wellbeing.’ I was wondering whether as a Parliament you might include an opening explanatory note to formally acknowledge this call from New Zealanders. This could also state that Parliament asks that the Commission specifically support cross party collective action in perpetuity. I also think it would be useful as we have seen beautifully captured with Treaty Settlement Bills’ some of the whakapapa of how we have come to be here, to describe how in this moment we are trying to bring an all of Parliament, all of government, and all of country way forward.

The Inquiry TOR was specific about the populations we were required to elevate attention to and ensure deep participation of. I found the specificity of who those key populations crucial as a panel member. I am very grateful we see some of this here with Maori, Pacific and disability, people experiencing mental distress and addiction, family members who support them, children and young

¹ Page 205 - <https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/inquiry-report/he-ara-oranga/>

people. I encourage the committee as others are encouraging to adopt all of the core population groups highlighted in our TOR particularly including Rainbow peoples, rural communities, children and young people state care, people in prison.²

I would like to see an edit to s14 to empower the Commission to be able to compel data around staff wellbeing and the supports for mental health and addictions wellbeing from the GCSB and NZSIS.

I would also like the bill to empower the Commission to be able to require information mentioned above for the Office of the Clerk, Office of the Speaker, and the Parliamentary Service. After specific recommendations of the 'Francis Report' and what I heard from Parliament staff last year in personal submissions I would like to see the Commission have the flexibility and not be impeded by OIA, or other elements to tautoko support to make the leadership centre for democracy well, if it so choses. Particularly being able to consider supporting the realisation of recommendations such as:

“17. I recommend a confidential mental health helpline be provided for all those on the precinct, with 24/7 access to clinical professionals.”

72. I recommend a safe and confidential channel for the reporting of health, safety and wellbeing breaches be developed, referenced in policies and well publicised.

73. I recommend Member and staff induction modules on health, safety and wellbeing be reviewed and updated in line with these findings and recommendations.

74. I recommend modules of continuing education be developed for staff, managers and Members, covering matters of health, safety and wellbeing, consistent with the revised policies and practices.

I wish you alofa in your work.

Josiah Tualamali'i

Former Panel Member – Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction 2018

² <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2018-go318>