

Public Health Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting: Tuesday 23 May, 9:30am to 4:30pm

Location/platform: Held in-person at Atura Hotel, 24 Hawkestone Street, Thorndon

Attendees

PHAC Members: Kevin Hague (Chair), Peter Crampton, Jason Gurney, Ruth Cunningham and Beverly Te Huia (in person). Sir Collin Tukuitonga (online)

Secretariat: Jonathon Jones and Chloe Reynolds

Guests: Melanie Turner, Rachel Smith, Sophia Beaton, Simon Medcalf, Emma Quealey, Jane Chambers, Hilary Sharpe, Anna Jackson, Dr Stella Vickers, Sarah Andrews, Sarah Appleton, Julie Fairfield, Professor Boyd Swinburn, Dr Sally Mackay, Associate Professor Lisa Te Morenga

Apologies: None

Opening of meeting

1. Opening karakia by Beverly Te Huia.
2. Members asked to update declarations of interest. Jason emailed through his update and the register was amended.
3. Review of 18 April 2023 minutes. Jason noted an error, and this was amended – (first action point under point 25 should read ‘qualitative research project’, not ‘quantitative research project’). Members then agreed the minutes were accurate and correct.

Actions:

- 18 April 2023 minutes and agenda to be published to PHAC website.

Activities since last meeting

4. The secretariat met with the Human Right Commissioner following his previous meeting with the PHAC. The Commission agreed to draft a paper for the PHAC on the right to healthy food in the context of human rights and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
5. The chair attended the Shared Public Health Leadership Group (SPHLG) meeting on 10 May 2023. The SPHLG has leaders from the Public Health Agency, Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora. The chair provided an update on the PHAC's work programme on food environments and the Pae Ora strategies.
6. Member noted work that is underway within Te Aka Whai Ora on food environments. PHAC agreed that it was important to be aware of this work.

Actions:

- PHAC to invite Selah Hart, Deputy Chief Executive, Public and Population Health to the next meeting.
- Chair to meet with Minister Verrall and discuss engaging Associate Ministers on its work programme.

Healthy Families NZ

7. Melanie Turner, Senior Portfolio Manager, Te Whatu Ora and Sophia Beaton, Practice and Development Lead and Rachel Smith, Lead Systems Innovator from Healthy Families Far North presented on the Health Families NZ initiative, focusing on their mahi relating to food environments.
8. Melanie provided an overview of the Healthy Families initiative, which is community-led, systems-focused and grounded in mātauranga Māori. It is a national initiative, locally led by 11 lead providers across the country.
9. Sophia and Rachel presented on their food system work in the far north. They highlighted key learnings:
 - whānau want to be more connected to the kai they eat
 - reciprocity was important, i.e. usage of surplus kai and shifting the value placed on sustainable living/food production.

10. They shared opportunities for system change with examples such as reimagining playgrounds through growing kai in playgrounds and fruit trees in parks to connect children with kai.
11. PHAC members were keen to hear more Pacific and urban examples and how these initiatives could be scaled-up.

Actions:

- PHAC secretariat to follow up with Healthy Families team about Pacific and urban examples and about scaling up initiatives.

Pae Ora Strategies

12. The Pae Ora strategy team updated the PHAC on the strategy development process, which is now in the final iterative stages. The team had recently received feedback from the Minister of Health.
13. A member commented that there was an opportunity to bring ideas from across the various strategies so that content speaks to each other. This could be through greater consistency across strategies, but it was also noted that there could be strength in having distinct approaches in each strategy, for example how Te Tiriti o Waitangi is outlined. It was noted that it was handled well in the Pacific Strategy.
14. The use of data was encouraged, especially upfront in the strategies. Its usage needs to be clear, and the meaning defined, for example amenable mortality. This led to a discussion on how the strategies will be communicated, starting with a strong vision and strong visual appeal.
15. It was noted that the Rainbow population is not mentioned in the rural strategy -there are some specific issues for this community in rural areas.
16. It was recommended that the New Zealand health strategy and the Hauora Māori strategy should act as an umbrella, with the detail and granularity for other population groups sitting the other strategies.
17. It was also recommended that a glossary of terms is included, to ensure consistency of understanding across the strategies, and consistent usage of the same words to reflect the same meaning.
18. It was agreed that each member would compile written feedback on a strategy, for the secretariat to send to the appropriate team.

Public Health Agency update

19. The PHAC received an update from the Public Health Agency (PHA) on its work on food environments. The PHA had led advice to Minister Edmonds on regulatory and non-regulatory options available to improve food and active environments.
20. The PHA are now drafting further advice, focused on obesity management (from prevention to treatment) and advice of reducing marketing of unhealthy food to children.
21. Hilary Sharpe, Principal Advisor provided an update of the cross-agency food environments steering group, which is drawing together what each agency is doing in the food environments space.
22. Anna Jackson, Senior Advisor noted she had recently attended a Food Safety Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Social Science and Economic Advisory Group Workshop focused on expanding FSANZ's remit to focus on obesity. She also noted the PHA had recently submitted on the Advertising Standards Authority consultation on the Draft Children's Advertising Code and Draft Food and Beverage Advertising Code.
23. Members encouraged more action on advertising to children beyond the code. The PHA noted that it was preparing ministerial advice. The PHA also noted that Manatū Hauora has commissioned a review of fiscal measures relating to food environments.
24. A discussion followed of how narratives and stories could help shape action on food environments. The group compared experience with tobacco and how there was a narrative shift away from individual rights to collective rights.

Research providers

25. Research providers Synergia and The Workshop provided updates on their projects for the PHAC.
26. Sarah Appleton and Dr Stella Vickers from Synergia provided an overview of its plan to deliver project involving a series of 35 stakeholder interviews. Synergia recommended further stakeholders to interview. A sense making session to work through the findings of the interviews will be held at the PHAC's

meeting on 17 July. A final report, one page summary and presentation will complete their deliverables.

27. Julie Fairfield from The Workshop gave an overview of the project which they will lead on understanding and shaping public narratives. The project will be delivered over three phases, focused on research culminating in a report on public narratives on food environments and a sense making session. The Workshop will assist with the implementation of its advice and the PHAC's final report.

Actions:

- Set up meeting with The Workshop and PHAC members for initial listening session.

Benchmarking project

28. Dr Sally Mackay, Professor Boyd Swinburn and Associate Professor Lisa Te Morenga of Health Coalition Aotearoa presented on the INFORMAS 2023 Healthy Food Environments Policy Index (Food-EPI) project to benchmark New Zealand's food environment policies against international best practice.
29. This is the fourth time the study has been conducted in New Zealand, which is generally timed to the national election. The study covers 47 indicators and assesses evidence of rate of government action relating to food environments.
30. The last study was completed in 2017 and since then it was noted that there had not been a lot of change to key policies due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic.
31. It was noted that an integrated food system strategy would be beneficial, but this could have a strong regional focus to innovate local food systems, a community, regional and national approach. Food is an economic commodity, generating livelihood and profits but could shift to a new model for food.
32. Other actions considered as part of the study include levels of disposable income, marketing of unhealthy food to children, food in schools, fiscal measures such as a levy or tax on sugary drinks and food composition targets. A national nutrition survey would provide infrastructure support and it was noted that survey methods are being developed but funding was needed for the survey.

Next steps

33. The PHAC discussed its forward work plan, including the potential for further engagement. This would help to improve legitimacy of the PHAC's work and quality.
34. The PHAC also discussed its future work programme and the process for determining its next topics of focus, which would begin at their next meeting.
35. The PHAC agreed to divide the draft Pae Ora strategies between themselves for reviewing and agreed a consistent format for their feedback. Following members would review each strategy:
 - i. NZ Health Strategy – Peter Crampton
 - ii. Hauora Māori Strategy – Jason Gurney
 - iii. Pacific Strategy – Collin Tukuitonga
 - iv. Health of Disabled People Strategy – Ruth Cunningham
 - v. Women's Strategy – Beverley Te Huia
 - vi. Rural Strategy – Kevin Hague
36. The PHAC discussed the qualitative interview project and list of stakeholders. Member asked for robust discussion on fiscal measures at a future PHAC meeting to work through the pros and cons.

Actions:

- PHAC members to review Pae Ora strategies they are assigned.
- Secretariat to forward members list of stakeholders that had been invited to participate in research.
- Secretariat to follow up with PHA colleagues about review of fiscal measures research.

Next meeting

37. The next PHAC meeting will be held online on Tuesday 20 June 2023.
38. Closing karakia by Beverley Te Huia.