

4 November 2022

Committee staff
Committee Secretariate
Social Services and Community Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

By email to: ssc@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou Social Services and Community Committee,

Re: Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill Consultation

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) and Tu Te Akaaka Roa, the New Zealand National Committee, would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback on the Accessibility for New Zealander's Bill. We have taken the time to consider the Bill and present our feedback below.

The RANZCP is a membership organisation that prepares doctors to be medical specialists in the field of psychiatry, supports and enhances clinical practice, advocates for people experiencing mental health conditions, and advises governments on mental health care. The RANZCP is guided on policy matters by a range of expert committees, including Te Kaunihera whose members include psychiatrists who have direct experience working in Māori mental health, as well as Māori community members who are involved in mental health service provision and policy development.

The RANZCP supports the approach to enhance accessibility practices, and remove barriers to access so that tāngata whaikaha, their whānau, and others with accessibility requirements can fully enjoy and exercise their human rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The RANZCP also supports the equity considerations made, through the establishment of the Māori nominations panel. The RANZCP also welcome the assurance that all Committee members will have knowledge and understanding of te Tiriti o Waitangi, te ao Māori, and tikanga Māori. We also support the approach to ensure that the Committee includes a diverse range of impairment type, cultural background and perspective, alongside representation of whānau and carers.

The RANZCP would like to suggest that there are extra considerations to be made for the inclusion of tāngata whaikaha with learning/intellectual disabilities, and neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Tāngata whaikaha with learning/intellectual disabilities face significant barriers when

accessing the health and mental health systems. There is a body of research that shows tāngata whaikaha with learning/intellectual disabilities access health and mental health services more frequently than other population groups. Findings also highlight that their life expectancy is approximately 20 years shorter when compared to the general population of Aotearoa. Tāngata whaikaha with learning/intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience an array of serious health conditions and co-morbidities, including mental health conditions. They are three times more likely than the general population to receive care or treatment for mental health conditions. They are seventeen times more likely to receive care or treatment for a psychotic disorder, and ten times more likely to receive care or treatment for dementia. They are also four times as likely to experience avoidable hospital admissions. Ministry of Health research has identified that financial, informational, and communicative barriers to accessing quality care play a large role in the poor outcomes faced by this population.

There is very little Aotearoa specific research, or Government data that highlights issues of access to health and mental health services, or associated outcomes for tāngata whaikaha with neurodevelopmental disorders. The RANZCP suggests that this group is represented on the Committee to gain a good understanding of the barriers and issues to accessing health and mental health services faced by this diverse community. International research suggests the prevalence of people with neurodevelopmental disorders presenting in the criminal justice system is high. Better understanding of the issues for tāngata whaikaha with neurodevelopmental disorders when accessing the health and mental health systems could help to lower the rate of incarceration within this population.

We are interested in hearing about the outcome of the consultation and look forward to accessing the final document. If you have any questions regarding this letter, or require additional information, please contact Ms Jane Renwick, Manager New Zealand National Office. Jane can be contacted at jane.renwick@ranzcp.org, or by phone at (04) 830 7184.

Naku noa, nā



Associate Professor Susanna Every-Palmer FRANZCP
Chair, Tu Te Akaaka Roa – New Zealand National Committee