



**Hauora  
Taiwhenua**  
Rural Health  
Network

**Te Mahere Rautaki  
Strategic Plan**  
2023 - 2026





*Kia tipu matomato ngā hapori i Aotearoa*  
*Healthy and thriving rural communities*  
*in Aotearoa New Zealand*





# Tā Mātau Tirohanga Whānui

## Our Vision

***Kia tipu matomato ngā hapori i Aotearoa***

***Healthy and thriving rural communities in Aotearoa New Zealand***

### **Ngā Uaratanga**

Manaakitanga  
Wairuatanga  
Kotahitanga  
Rangatiratanga

### **Our Values**

Generosity  
Spirituality  
Togetherness  
Leadership



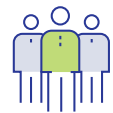
#### ***Manaakitanga / Generosity***

We will acknowledge the mana of others, and express that through aroha, hospitality, generosity and mutual respect. Through this we will bring the best out of each other and our Network.



#### ***Wairuatanga / Spirituality***

We will recognise and acknowledge the values and beliefs of each other, those we work with, and our guests no matter where we meet or gather.



#### ***Rangatiratanga / Leadership***

We will strive to show qualities of rangatiratanga through selflessness, humility, and diplomacy. We will lead by example through genuine commitment, integrity and honesty; tika, pono and aroha.



#### ***Kotahitanga / Togetherness***

We will work collaboratively to enhance our collective rural voice, and move in unity to bring our vision to life.



## ***The environment in which this strategic plan is written***

Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network (the Network) has been functioning as a coalition of rural health and wellbeing groups speaking with a unified voice for a little over 12 months. This first Strategic Plan sits within the dynamics of a health system under significant change as the Pae Ora Healthy Futures Act has been in place for less than a year. The Rural Health Strategy required under the Act, a first for New Zealand, is still being developed. Government agencies Manatū Hauora, and Te Whatu Ora are in the forming and storming phases and a long way from performing.

Their equal partner, Te Aka Whai Ora Māori Health Authority, was established at the same time, to lead one of the most significant changes to the New Zealand Health System – empowering Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga in the design and delivery of health care services. Acknowledging the importance of this, the Network has been established as a bicultural organisation committed to our role in addressing the health inequities of Māori who live and work in rural communities.

The kawenata the Network has with Te Rōpū Ārahi, our Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner, guides our commitment to honouring Te Tiriti. Together, we will face the challenges Te Akai Whai Ora will lead us to, and guide us through: learning how to work in true partnership with iwi, see and respond to our conscious, and unconscious bias and institutionalised racism, and embed te ao Māori in the work we do as a Network and in collaboration with others.

Network members can claim a major success with the inclusion of Rural Communities as an identified priority population within the Pae Ora Healthy Futures Act attributable to their collective advocacy over many years. Because of this, Government and its agencies, will be held to account for rural health outcomes. This will be enabled by the Otago and Waikato Universities' Geographical Classification of Health (GCH) which has been adopted by Manatū Hauora as the tool that will differentiate rural from urban populations. Through the GCH, health system data will be analysed on the basis of rurality, and available to the Network to monitor progress towards rural health equity.

A programme of funded 'early actions' included in the Te Pae Tata Interim NZ Health Plan for action in the first 18 months of Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora being stood up, is underway. A first ever 'rural desk' and team within Te Whatu Ora leads this work. Through them, the Network is being asked to contribute to a growing number of taskforce and working groups to ensure rural voices are enmeshed in these initiatives.



While this sounds positive, we can't lose sight of the harsh realities our members and rural communities have to deal with every day that include:

- Living in rural New Zealand has a significantly detrimental effect on health outcomes, and harsher still, that rural Māori have some of the worst health outcomes of any demographic in this country.
- The rural health workforce has reached 'emergency' status as rural health services deal with vast numbers of staff shortages across all professions, leaving many of those who remain working in them, feeling overworked and poorly paid. They are increasingly open to being lured by urban and off-shore health providers flaunting higher salaries and better work conditions.
- Rural health providers battle with funding models that do not reflect the realities of providing essential services to small and geographically dispersed populations.
- Long drives through rough and deteriorating roads and bridges, made considerably worse due to climate induced weather events, are expensive and take a lot of time resulting in many people having little choice but to ignore early health warnings and not seek medical intervention until things reach crisis point.
- The development of telehealth initiatives seem progressive in their intent, but in reality, are thwarted by variable access to high-speed connectivity, cost barriers for those who cannot afford smart devices and the essential data, and real challenges to those who do not have the skills and/or trust in the systems to utilise this technology.

Change of the magnitude presented in the reforms of the New Zealand Health System offer the Network vast opportunities to influence rural health outcomes. The Network's membership spans an amazing pool of dedicated health professionals and rural community advocates, who are ready and willing to embrace change, share their knowledge, and work collaboratively to ensure a positive and vibrant future for those living rurally.

*This Strategic Plan sets the platform from which the Network, as a diverse and committed membership organisation, will grasp the opportunity to work together to influence the New Zealand Health System Reforms and ensure that every rural New Zealander, Māori and non-Māori, has the opportunity to thrive and enjoy healthy and rewarding lives.*







## Our Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Our kawenata with Te Rōpū Ārahi guides our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Through it, and the collective efforts of our operational team and members, we strive to contribute towards the elimination of health disparities, especially for rural Māori.

## Our Purpose

*A collective organisation advocating for the health and wellbeing of rural New Zealanders.*

## Our Objectives are to:

- Be aligned to the values and concepts of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and acknowledge the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua
- Be the trusted united voice, providing representation and leadership for rural health and wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Advocate for equitable access to Health and Disability Services for rural New Zealanders and especially rural Māori
- Advocate for training, education, pay parity and working conditions that will sustain a culturally appropriate and competent rural health workforce
- Support rural health services to plan, prepare and respond in times of crisis or emergency
- Promote research opportunities that positively influence rural health outcomes
- Advocate for environmentally and financially sustainable government policies that have an impact on the social determinants of the health and wellbeing of rural communities

## Our Roles

- Members are what constitute the Network; its most important resource, and reason for being
- Chapters / Taumata provide a base for connected membership and to inform Council priorities
- Council is a multi-professional representation of Chapter members' voices that informs the Network's activities
- Te Rōpū Ārahi partners with the Board to enhance our alignment with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and advocacy for equitable health outcomes for rural Māori
- Board provides robust governance of the Network
- Staff seek advice from, listen to, and support our members, and work to provide the services they require

## Our Most Important Functions

*The Network has three vital functions that are complementary to, and co-dependant on, one another:*

- 1 To support the health and wellbeing of our members
- 2 To provide excellent services under our government funded contracts
- 3 To advocate for sustainable and accessible health services for rural communities

Through nationwide relationships with members, and the organisations they are connected to, these functions work as one to enable us to achieve our purpose and vision. Organisational sustainability and economies of scale are derived from long-standing, effective, and prudent service provision.

## Organisation Risks

The Network functions within the dynamics of a health system undergoing significant change and financial scrutiny. At the same time, there are many rural communities severely impacted, with alarming regularity, by the effects of climate change. Of critical concern, is the highly recognised, but poorly responded to, rural health workforce crisis and the underfunding of primary and community care services in rural communities.

*These combine to present genuine risks to achieving the aims of this Strategic Plan including:*

- The rapidly enhanced profile of the Network at all levels of the health sector, exceeds the organisation's capacity to respond
- Our mandate to represent the rural health sector can be compromised through fragmented representation of our member's interests
- The energy and enthusiasm of Chapters results in their expectations not being well aligned with our operational capacity to respond
- Service contracts are vulnerable to systemic pressures on the allocation of Vote Health funding.

The Network's Board applies a comprehensive risk management process to identify and mitigate risks that present during the course of our business operations.





# Our Strategic Priorities

## Advocacy

*We will work with opportunities that arise from:*

- Pae Ora Healthy Futures Act and the first Rural Health Strategy
- Te Pae Tata Interim Health Plan and the newly established Te Whatu Ora rural health team
- The rurally relevant data that results from embedding the Geographic Classification for Health in health service reporting and monitoring
- Inclusive and diverse membership.



*Our focus will be on achieving equitable health outcomes for rural communities especially rural Māori*



*Our focus will be on monitoring rural health system performance outcomes and holding agencies to account for them*



*Our focus will be on equitable funding for rural health services*

## Our Approach to Advocacy

- Engage with Te Rōpū Ārahi, and our Māori membership, to weave Te Ao Māori perspectives through all layers of our advocacy
- Be recognised as the rural voice, contributing to the development, implementation and monitoring of evidence-based health policy and system performance
- Actively participate in sector-wide initiatives that:
  - Enable equitable access to health services and improved outcomes
  - Plan, prepare for and mitigate the impact of national emergencies and environmental disasters
  - Enable equitable access to digital connectivity.



## Collaborative Partnerships

*We will build on the opportunities that arise from:*

- Meaningful connection with our network of engaged and valued members
- Working collaboratively across all levels of government and the health sector.



*Our focus will be on increasing our relevancy to rural Māori health providers*



*Our focus will be on ensuring everyone living in rural and remote communities has unrestricted access to the digital technology they need to access health care*

### Our Approach to Developing Collaborative Partnerships

- Develop meaningful relationships with Te Aka Whai Ora, rural iwi health providers, and as appropriate, Iwi Māori Partnership Boards
- Develop relationships with Manatū Hauora, Te Whatu Ora, ACC and other government agencies, other NGOs, and health networks, with whom we have shared and overlapping objectives, to leverage our combined strengths and capabilities
- Support Māori and bi-cultural Chapters to build their membership and engagement across all rural health professions
- Work collaboratively to apply Government's "Health in all Policies" approach to improving the socio-economic determinants of rural health outcomes.







# Capacity Building

We will consolidate as a:

- Proficient and professionally reliable national organisation
- National, regional and local network of rural voices.



***Our focus will be on addressing the rural health workforce crisis***



***Our focus will be on building strength and organisational resilience into our Network***

## Our Approach to Capacity Building

- Ongoing development of our operational team's understanding of tikanga and Te Ao Māori
- With our Tiriti partners, make our Tikanga Guide available to all members and member organisations
- Safeguard our financial sustainability through excellent delivery of all service contracts:
  - o Provide highly respected rural general practice locum services
  - o Collaboratively develop a new rural hospital locum service
  - o Work with our members to provide a locally delivered, multi-professional, rurally focussed programme that encourages rural school students to consider a career in rural health
- Strengthen our visibility and engagement by leveraging the collective capacity of members
- Develop and maintain technology that supports all levels of our organisational activities
- Promote, advocate for, and support the expansion of career pathways, support mechanisms and infrastructure essential to the development and sustainability of a highly skilled, multi-disciplinary rural health workforce.



## Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

### Strategic Priorities

#### Advocacy

- Identify opportunities that arise from:
- › Pae Ora and a Rural Health Strategy
  - › Te Pae Tata – a rural health action plan, national rural health manager and team
  - › Geographic Classification for Health
  - › Inclusive and diverse membership
  - › Equitable access to digital connectivity

#### Collaborative partnerships

- Work together with:
- › Our Network of engaged and valued members
  - › Te Rōpū Ārahi, our Te Tiriti partner
  - › Organisations that share our values and commitment to improving rural health outcomes

#### Developing our Capacity

- Grow our organisations' reach through:
- › Being a reliable, stable and connected national organisation with robust infrastructure
  - › Delivering a high performance rural locum service
  - › Providing a national regional and local chorus of rural voices

### Work Towards

#### Improving health outcomes for rural Māori

So that whānau who live and work in rural communities are able to live longer, healthier lives in the communities of their choice.

#### A vibrant rural health workforce

That is from rural communities, educated and trained in rural communities, well supported and funded to stay in rural communities, across every health profession.

### To Enable

#### Accessible, sustainable and resilient health services in rural communities

For both whānau who live and work in rural and remote communities and are reliant on access to planned, acute and emergency health services now, and those who will do so, well into the future.

### Our Vision

*Kia tipu matomato ngā hapori i Aotearoa*  
 Healthy and thriving rural communities in Aotearoa New Zealand



### Ngā Uaratanga - Our Values



### Our focus will be on:



Achieving equitable health outcomes for rural whānau



Monitoring rural health system performance and holding agencies to account for these



Equitable funding for rural health services



Increasing our influence on rural Māori health outcomes



Addressing the rural health workforce crisis



Building strength and organisational resilience into our Network



Ensuring everyone living in rural and remote communities has unrestricted access to the digital technology they need to access health care



# 23-26

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