

# Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

## Submission on Budget Policy Statement 2021

**To:** Select Committee

**Submitter:** Canterbury District Health Board

Attn: Evon Currie  
Community and Public Health  
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**Proposal:** The Budget Policy Statement 2021 (BPS) sets out the Government's priorities for the 2021 Budget. It explains the approach being used to develop the Budget and the broad parameters within which decisions will be made.

## **SUBMISSION ON BUDGET POLICY STATEMENT 2021**

### **Details of submitter**

1. Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB).
2. The submitter is responsible for promoting the reduction of adverse effects on the health of people and communities and to improve, promote and protect their health pursuant to the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Health Act 1956. These statutory obligations are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and, in the Canterbury District, are carried out under contract by Community and Public Health under Crown funding agreements on behalf of the Canterbury District Health Board.

### **Details of submission**

3. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Budget Policy Statement 2021 (BPS) .
4. The future health of our populations is not just reliant on hospitals, but on a responsive environment where all sectors work collaboratively.
5. Health is influenced by a wide range of factors beyond the health sector. Health care services manage disease and trauma and are an important determinant of health outcomes; however health creation and wellbeing (overall quality of life) is influenced by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These environmental, social and behavioural factors are often referred to as the 'social determinants of health'<sup>1</sup>. The most effective way to maximise people's wellbeing is to take these factors into account as early as possible during decision making and strategy development.

### **General Comments**

6. The CDHB commends Treasury on the overarching policy goals of the BPS which reflect the importance of a strong public health response to maintaining economic wellbeing and ensuring that some key determinants of health (climate change, housing affordability and child poverty) are prioritised.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health Advisory Committee. 2004. *The Health of People and Communities. A Way Forward: Public Policy and the Economic Determinants of Health*. Public Health Advisory Committee: Wellington.

7. The CDHB also supports orientation of this BSP as taking a wellbeing approach with its 5 wellbeing objectives. This approach recognises determinants of health which are specific to our current situation in New Zealand and the pressing need to curb climate harm caused by our current economy, consistent with our commitment to global priorities such as a climate-resilient, sustainable and low-emissions economy.
8. The CDHB recommends that rather than grouping Māori and Pasifika together, Māori are given appropriate status as tangata whenua and that the budget refers to how it will honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations. There is currently no mention of Te Tiriti within the BSP at all and reference to Māori is mainly in relation to demographic statements or comments about Māori disadvantage. This is not an empowering nor accurate depiction of the unique contributions our Māori population (which despite the barriers faced) make.
9. The CDHB is pleased to see an upfront statement that *“the Government will carefully prioritise spending to those people and areas that need it most”* showing commitment to an equity approach to spending.
10. The BSP lacks recognition that despite the fact that the economy as a whole is making a strong recovery during the pandemic, there are individuals, whānau and communities in New Zealand who are experiencing significant financial hardship during the pandemic<sup>2</sup>. Job losses or reduction of hours or wages (which may not be reflected in unemployment statistics) and rising housing and living costs have had a significant impact<sup>3</sup>. It is recommended that the BSP in stating that our response has been successful recognises this impact for some. The Wage subsidy, rent freezes and other measures included in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (CRRF) have been instrumental for these groups and it is important that these measures continue to address the widening inequalities as a result of this pandemic<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. (July 31 2020). COVID-19 Social Impact Dashboard. Retrieved from: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/article/sppu-covid-19-social-impact-dashboard-report-5>

<sup>3</sup> Prickett, K.C. Fletcher, M., Chapple, S. Doan, N. & Smith, C. (2020). Life in lockdown: The economic and social effect of lockdown during Alert Level 4 in New Zealand. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington. Retrieved from: [https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1865512/WP-20-03-covid-19-life-in-lockdown.pdf](https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1865512/WP-20-03-covid-19-life-in-lockdown.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. (July 31 2020). COVID-19 Social Impact Dashboard. Retrieved from: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/article/sppu-covid-19-social-impact-dashboard-report-5>

## Specific comments

11. The 'Health' section (page 6) describes mental wellbeing measures that diverge across population groups, but the only measure described is loneliness where a range of other measures may be more helpful. In Canterbury, we utilise the WHO-5 in our Canterbury Wellbeing Survey. We note that government has an array of other mental wellbeing statistics to draw on, such as the New Zealand GSS data around life satisfaction, family well-being, etc. A positive measure of mental wellbeing is recommended.
12. The CDHB recommends that the box on page 7 includes an explicit reference to the government's investment in mental health and wellbeing *promotion* as an initiative that supports New Zealanders' physical and mental health. Mental health services are for when people are already unwell, and tend to support people experiencing mental illness. Mental health promotion empowers people to look after their own wellbeing and support others. A specific example of this is the Getting Through Together campaign<sup>5</sup>, a national mental health promotion campaign. The emphasis on population-level, 'upstream' interventions was emphasised in *He Ara Oranga*, and Getting Through Together is one of the few interventions/supports exemplifying this approach.
13. Within the 'Natural Capital' section (page 8), agriculture is identified as the sector which generates the most emissions in New Zealand, alongside transport. Financial support to transition to more sustainable farming practices alongside existing investment in technology which would expedite emissions reductions is recommended.
14. The CDHB supports ongoing funding for community-led support which has been so successful during the pandemic. The ability for Whānau Ora providers to provide tailored responses for their communities should not be unique to the pandemic, continuing this investment to allow Whānau Ora providers to ensure ongoing health inequities are addressed within their community is important.
15. The BSP refers to housing, particularly the strength of the housing market as inherently positive for New Zealand society. It needs to be recognised that the stronger New Zealand's housing market the biggest inequities there are in obtaining

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<sup>5</sup> Getting Through Together (n.d) [https://www.allright.org.nz/campaigns/getting-through-together?gclid=EAlaIqobChMI5ZX8sckS7wIVSx0rCh1PsQUcEAAAYASAAEgJkJfD\\_BwE](https://www.allright.org.nz/campaigns/getting-through-together?gclid=EAlaIqobChMI5ZX8sckS7wIVSx0rCh1PsQUcEAAAYASAAEgJkJfD_BwE)

affordable and secure housing for those on lower incomes<sup>6</sup>. The CDHB supports the 8000 extra social and transitional houses that have been committed to, however this falls short of the social housing need we are currently experiencing in New Zealand. In September 2020 there were 21,415 applicants on the Housing Register, a 53.3% increase from September 2019<sup>7</sup>. The CDHB recommends that the Accommodation Supplement is reviewed and increased given that due to the social housing shortage many whānau are dependent on the private rental market to meet their housing needs. Private rental tenants tend to pay a much higher proportion of their income on housing than those who have access to social housing or own their own home<sup>8</sup>.

16. On page 13, part 3, the final paragraph describes barriers to Māori (and Pacific people) achieving their aspirations, and describes how inequities mean that New Zealand misses out on the important contribution Māori and Pacific people 'could' make to our economy, society, and culture. It would be fairer and more accurate to recognise the wealth of contributions Māori and Pacific already make (for example, volunteering at rates higher than Pākehā) *despite* the barriers they face, and the role for Pākehā institutions in welcoming, valuing, and promoting these contributions. It is important to note the drivers of inequality for Māori achieving aspirations is embedded in systematic and institutional racism which they have faced since colonisation and the unique opportunity that economic policy has recognise this and apply measures to address these injustices.

## Conclusion

17. The CDHB does not wish to be heard in support of this submission.
18. Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Budget Policy Statement 2021.

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<sup>6</sup> Green, S. (2020). Inequality and New Zealand. BERL Retrieved from: <https://berl.co.nz/our-foundation/inequality-and-new-zealand>

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Social Development (n.d). Statistics: Housing Register. Retrieved from <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/index.html>

<sup>8</sup> Johnson, A., Howden-Chapman, P. & Equb, S. (2018) A Stocktake of New Zealand Housing: February 2018. New Zealand Government. Retrieved from: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-02/A%20Stocktake%20of%20New%20Zealand%27s%20Housing.pdf>

**Person making the submission**



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