

## Meeting with Diabetes NZ 9 October 2025

<b>Due to MO:</b>	8 October 2025	<b>Reference</b>	HNZ00100393
<b>To:</b>	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
<b>From:</b>	Jacqui Lunday, Acting Executive National Director - Clinical		
<b>Copy to:</b>	n/a		
<b>Security level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>Priority</b>	Routine
<b>Consulted:</b>	n/a		
<b>Proactive Release:</b>	This title is not proposed by Health NZ for proactive release		

### Contact for further discussion

Name	Position	Phone	1st contact
Mary Cleary-Lyons	Director, National Clinical Networks		x
Kendra Sanders	Programme Manager		

### Attachments

**Appendix 1:** Biographies of attendees

**Appendix 2:** Diabetes New Zealand briefing to the Minister of Health 2025

Appendix 2 has been withheld in full.

## About the meeting

<b>Purpose</b>	You are meeting with Heather Verry, CE of Diabetes New Zealand, Jenny Black, Board Chair of Diabetes New Zealand and Liz Dutton, Head of Clinical Services at Diabetes NZ. They would like to discuss the background of their organisation and the impact of diabetes.
<b>Date</b>	Thursday 09 October 2025
<b>Time</b>	10.00am – 10:20am
<b>Venue</b>	EW 6.6
<b>Attendees</b>	Heather Verry, Chief Executive, Diabetes New Zealand Jenny Black, Board Chair, Diabetes New Zealand Liz Dutton, Head of Clinical Services, Diabetes New Zealand [Note, biographies are attached as Appendix 1]
<b>Health New Zealand   Te Whatu Ora officials</b>	Rawiri Jansen, Co-Lead Mahitahi Matehuka, National Diabetes Network, National Clinical Networks (available to attend online).
<b>Media</b>	media are not expected
<b>Talking points</b>	

## Background and context

1. Established in 1962, Diabetes New Zealand (NZ) is a long-standing charitable trust. It is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that represents and supports people affected by diabetes across New Zealand.
2. Their purpose is to reduce the impact of Type 1 diabetes and incidence of other types of diabetes in New Zealand with a mission to ensure that every person living with diabetes has equitable access to affordable, quality diabetes care and education.
3. Diabetes NZ focuses on:
  - a) Advocacy for people affected by diabetes

- b) Raising awareness of diabetes and its complications
  - c) Education and support for self-management and prevention
  - d) Research funding through Diabetes NZ Research Foundation.
  - e) Working closely with government and its health agencies to promote more appropriate investment in its treatment and prevention
4. The National Office of Diabetes NZ is based in Wellington with 14 staff whose responsibilities include
    - a) management of staff across NZ
    - b) operating a 0800 helpline and info email,
    - c) distributing over 1,000 brochures on a weekly basis to on request to medical centres, health & wellness organisations and individual
    - d) distributing Type 1 resources – newly diagnosed packs to every child under 18 yrs at time of diagnoses & Jerry the Bear packs for children with Type 1 aged between 4-10 years.
    - e) marketing, which includes digital media, website, electronic newsletters, Diabetes Action Month campaign.
    - f) management of partnership contracts e.g. Health NZ Regional Network Administration
  5. Diabetes NZ operates 23 community support groups and employs nine Youth Coordinators who provide peer support, networking, and activities for children and adults with Type 1 diabetes, including camps and events.
  6. Nine Diabetes Community Coordinators/Kaiawhina Mate Huka work alongside primary health organisations, iwi, and Māori and Pacific providers to deliver Diabetes Self-Management Programmes. Additionally, a Mobile Diabetes Awareness Service offers free education and testing in high-risk communities, removing barriers to accessing care.
  7. Diabetes NZ works in close partnership with the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD), NZ Child & Youth Clinical Network & Paediatric Society of New Zealand, the Diabetes New Zealand Research Foundation (DNZRF), as well as other primary and community health providers.
  8. Diabetes NZ launched a campaign in August 2025 in support of funding for all individuals with type 2 diabetes to gain access to Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs). They are actively seeking signatures on their petition.
  9. Diabetes New Zealand supports Mahitahi Matehuka | Diabetes National Clinical Network by providing administrative and project support to regional diabetes networks. A central bridging role that connects regional networks and the National Clinical Network.
  10. Professor Sir Jim Mann, is the Patron of Diabetes NZ and a medical researcher and endocrinologist.
  11. Diabetes NZ Board members include: Jenny Black (Chair), Rod Slater, Bev Gibson, Dee

## Matters for discussion

### Diabetes in New Zealand

12. Diabetes is a leading cause of mortality and health loss in New Zealand. The number of people diagnosed with diabetes in New Zealand has increased by over a third in the last decade to almost 280,000. This increase is largely due to the growing prevalence of type 2 diabetes, which accounts for around nine out of ten diabetes cases.
13. Prevalence of people living with type 2 diabetes is predicted to reach between 390,000–430,000 by 2040.
14. Affecting 1 in 4 New Zealanders aged 15 years and over, type 2 diabetes is the single biggest challenge facing the New Zealand health system and the 4th leading cause of mortality.
15. The prevalence of all types of diabetes continues to increase. Diabetes is the leading cause for people developing blindness, preventable lower limb amputations and has a significant impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of whānau.
16. Māori, Pacific and Indian communities have seen the largest increase in diabetes over the last decade. However, it is Māori and Pacific communities that experience the greatest burden of diabetes-related complications and who experience the largest inequities in access to care. These groups experience higher prevalence, earlier onset, higher mortality and complication rates, and greater health loss compared with other population groups.
17. The cost of managing diabetes in 2020 was estimated to be \$2.1 billion annually, or 0.67% of GDP. By 2040, it is estimated that this will rise to over \$3.5 billion. Without effective intervention, largely avoidable costs of treating those with diabetes and diabetes-related comorbidities will increasingly crowd out other health priorities.

### A solution from Diabetes NZ

18. Diabetes NZ have identified four main barriers that currently exacerbate inequities
  - a) Services aren't reaching those who need it most
  - b) People don't know how to self-manage their diabetes
  - c) The healthcare system is intimidating and challenging
  - d) Unprecedented strain on the healthcare system.
19. To mitigate these barrier, Diabetes NZ delivers an out-reach service that is flexible, mobile and delivers a consistent national service to meet local need.
  - a) They partner with iwi, Māori and Pacific health providers, and primary care organisations to deliver outreach support and education.

- b) Their Diabetes Community Services teams (Kaitiaki Māori Haka) facilitate Diabetes Self-Management Education programmes alongside clinicians trained by Diabetes NZ.
- c) They provide culturally responsive health literacy education and support for people with diabetes, their whānau, and carers, helping them navigate complex health systems and access the right care with confidence.
- d) Through these partnerships, they reduce the need for GP visits, simplify access to services, and empower people to manage or prevent diabetes at home, easing pressure on the wider health system.

## Appendix 1: Biographies of attendees



### **Heather Verry, Chief Executive, Diabetes New Zealand**

Heather has been the Chief Executive of Diabetes NZ since 2017. She has a background in not-for-profit organisations.

Since working at Diabetes NZ, she has completed a full national unification of the organisation, driving positive change and engagement around the country. Heather has the experience to ensure Diabetes NZ continues to grow its reach into communities and through key stakeholders to improve diabetes awareness, education and advocacy.

Prior to joining Diabetes NZ Heather has held Chief Executive roles with the NZ Police Association and the Manfeild Park Trust, a motor racing circuit and events centre in Manawatū. Heather has also acted as Deputy Chief Executive of the New Zealand Council of Victim Support Groups.



### **Jenny Black, Board Chair, Diabetes New Zealand**

Jenny is an independent board member of Diabetes New Zealand; with 15 years experience in governance chairing District Health Boards including Nelson Marlborough, Te Hiringa Hauora and as a director & trustee of several health entities.

Qualified Dietician.



### **Liz Dutton, Head of Clinical Services, Diabetes New Zealand**

Liz manages the Diabetes Community Coordinators around the country employed by Diabetes NZ. The purpose of this role is to establish partnerships, and engage with, clinical teams in PHOs where diabetes community coordinators are located or plan to be located.

Former clinical nurse specialist in diabetes at Tū Ora Compass Health PHO, Wellington and has a Post-Graduate Diploma in Primary Healthcare with a focus on Long Term Conditions and Diabetes.