

Health New Zealand | Board

Summary of Board meeting – 13 May 2026

3.00pm – 5.30pm

The Health New Zealand Board met to consider key strategic, financial, and operational matters supporting the delivery of health services across New Zealand.

Strategic Direction and Governance

The Board discussed proposed adjustments to the governance arrangements following the appointment of the new Chair, including the establishment of new committees and a revised meeting cadence designed to strengthen oversight and support effective decision-making.

This reflects a continued focus on ensuring strong governance foundations as Health NZ matures as a national organisation.

Budget and Financial Sustainability

The Board considered the draft 2026/27 budget, including the underlying assumptions, cost pressures, and planned productivity improvements required to maintain services within available funding.

Discussions focused on:

- Managing increasing demand for hospital and specialist services
- Strengthening access to services, and throughput across the system
- Ensuring financial sustainability while delivering on health targets and patient outcomes

The Board noted that further work is underway to refine delivery plans and confirm final budget settings ahead of formal approval later in the year.

Digital Investment and Systems Modernisation

The Board considered progress with Health NZ's digital transformation programme, including the proposed implementation of a modern, integrated digital platform to support finance, workforce, and supply chain functions.

After extensive rigorous planning and analysis, the Board has approved a technology path subject to conditions being met, recognising the importance of digital systems in improving service integration, operational efficiency, and data-driven decision-making.

Health System Performance and Operations

The Chief Executive provided an update on system performance and operational priorities. Key points included:

- Continued progress against national health targets, including improvements in elective treatment volumes and cancer care delivery
- Ongoing recovery from the impact of industrial action on waiting lists, with strong improvements seen in FSAs and treatments.
- Focused actions to improve emergency department access and prepare for winter
- Continued efforts to strengthen workforce capability, recruitment, and retention

Workforce and Service Delivery

The Board discussed the importance of workforce planning and deployment in delivering quality services. Key areas of focus include:

- Improving workforce deployment and rostering practices
- Supporting recruitment into priority areas, including mental health and services where high vacancies exist
- Strengthening leadership and accountability at regional and service levels

The Board reinforced that patient safety and service quality remain the primary considerations in all operational decisions.

Mental Health Services

The Board noted continued progress in delivering mental health services and maintaining the protected mental health funding allocation.

Discussions highlighted:

- Challenges in workforce availability and recruitment
- The importance of ensuring funding is translated into improved access and outcomes
- The need for ongoing monitoring and transparency of mental health expenditure

Looking Ahead

The Board will continue to:

- Refine and finalise the 2026/27 budget and performance expectations
- Progress key digital and infrastructure investments
- Strengthen governance and accountability arrangements
- Maintain strong oversight of service delivery, workforce, and financial performance

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 3 June 2026.