

PLATFORM



- MEDIA RELEASE -

Signs point in the right direction for the long road ahead

Today's release of *He Ara Oranga, the Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction* marks the potential for Government to set a bold new direction for New Zealand's mental health and addiction support system.

"Platform Trust congratulates the Inquiry panel on many months of hard work hearing the voices of tangata whai ora, whanau, workers and services up and down the country," says Naomi Cowan, Chairperson of Platform Trust. "This report represents a chance for New Zealand to alter its course in the long term. If Government adopts the Inquiry's recommendations, we would make better support available to more people, earlier in their experiences of mental health and addiction issues."

The report's recommendations align with Platform's own submission to the Inquiry. In particular the importance of cross-party leadership for the future is highlighted as essential to the success of any changes. The Inquiry report acknowledges that system changes of this magnitude will require a long term approach that cannot be vulnerable to political change.

The critical role of NGOs, and the barriers that have prevented NGOs from doing more, are also highlighted in the report. This was important for Platform's members who continue to provide community-based mental health and addiction services despite the challenging funding and compliance environment they work in.

"We look forward with great optimism to the Government's response in March next year," asserts Naomi. "We know this will be a big challenge, but the report acknowledges that change is imperative, and it's a challenge that all of us can and must work on collectively."

Platform Trust is the national network of community organisations that support New Zealanders by providing a wide range of mental health and addiction services and creating a positive place for people experiencing mental health and addiction issues to live and work.

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Platform's submission to the Inquiry can be found here:
<https://www.platform.org.nz/uploads/files/Platform%20Submission.pdf>

A summary of Platform's three recommendations in its submission are to:

- generate cross-party commitment to setting a long term vision for the future;
- establish independent commissioning for evidence-driven action; and
- invest in the capacity and capability of the community sector.

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