

**– MEDIA RELEASE –****New Zealand Politicians begin to take action on mental health and addiction**

A cross political Mental Health and Addictions Wellbeing group will be launched on Wednesday 28 August hosted by **Sir John Kirwan** and **Moe Milne (ONZM)** who have both been at the forefront of our country's often difficult conversations about mental health and addiction.

New Zealanders have been very vocal about what needs to change in the mental health and addiction system. During the mental health inquiry, people shared their stories about the impact of suicide, their frustrations about having to wait to get help, and the discrimination they experience.

The statistics tell the same story. Currently New Zealand has the highest youth suicide rate in the OECD, and people with severe mental health and addiction challenges have an average 25 year lower life expectancy than the rest of the population. The number of people accessing mental health and addiction services has also grown by 73% in the past 10 years.

In response, He Ara Oranga, the report into mental health and addiction made strong recommendations and suggestions about what needs to change.

Platform Trust is proud to be working with a passionate group of parliamentarians who have responded to the inquiry by creating a cross-party mental health and addictions wellbeing group.

“We are pleased that our offer for Platform Trust to take the secretariat role in the cross-party Mental Health and Addictions Wellbeing group has been accepted by a group of committed parliamentarians from all political parties” says Marion Blake, CEO of Platform Trust. “As a politically neutral group Platform understands the views and issues of many in the mental health and addiction community sector”.

The cross party group will be open to all members of Parliament to provide them with information, evidence and knowledge exchange to support longer term thinking around mental health and addiction and its wider impacts in New Zealand. A small executive of Matt Doocey, Louisa Wall, Chloe Swarbrick, Jenny Marcroft and David Seymour has been formed to lead this work.

**Josiah Tualamali'i** was a member of the inquiry panel and will be the event's MC.

Prior to the launch on Wednesday 28 August, Sir John, Moe and Josiah will be speaking to media at a press conference at **4pm in the old legislative chamber** at Parliament. Taimi Allan, CEO of [Changing Minds](http://ChangingMinds.org.nz), who also has a lived experience of mental health will also be available for questions.

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, learn, work and play.

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