

Strategic plan

2022–2032



Dental Council
Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho

Hoki whakamuri,
kia anga whakamua

Look to your past
to forge the future



Foreword

Tēna koutou katoa

We are heavily influenced by the health and disability system and the planned changes in its direction. This strategic plan helps ensure that we're ready to support the changes with good evidence to reduce harm while being proportionate and fair to those we regulate.

The first step to growth is reflecting on our history and performance as the regulator of oral health practitioners.

We recognise that keeping up with constant change and successfully improving performance requires lifelong learning. So, while practitioners are engaging in professional development to ensure their patients receive safe and competent care, Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho | the Dental Council (Te Kaunihera) is looking at how we can evolve our regulatory practice to better keep patients safe.

This plan focusses on three key ways to improve our regulatory performance, namely by:

- collaborating proactively and effectively across the health sector with our regulatory partners and other agencies and stakeholders to improve equity and cultural safety
- adopting a whole-of-system view and seeking to better understand how the public experiences oral health care to enhance protection of public health and safety
- using robust analysis and data effectively to make more evidence-based decisions and improve our ability to measure success against the outcomes we want to achieve.

At the same time, we want to work with practitioners to ensure they understand and comply with their regulatory obligations and practice competently, take responsibility for their own learning and demonstrate strong regulatory leadership.

Critical to this plan is our focus on cultural safety. New Zealanders are increasingly placing a greater emphasis on te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi (te Tiriti) as ongoing harm and disadvantage caused by racism and colonisation for Māori is now more widely recognised than ever before. We have a collective responsibility to help ensure patients experience improved oral health equity in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are working to embed te Tiriti into everything we do.

Health sector reforms signal collaborative, team-based practice and a multi-disciplinary approach for health professions and providers – this plan reflects that same focus for Te Kaunihera and how we work now and in the future.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Cautley'.

Andrew Cautley
Chair



Chief Executive message

Kia ora tātou

The future for us is to follow good regulatory practice where it is sustainable for us, our practitioners, and the educational programmes we accredit. I'm excited about building on our previous strategic plan, taking a fresh look at how we deliver our legislative functions and starting work on the new strategic projects set out in this plan.

We're looking at increasing our prevention activities to support our regulated practitioners and programmes, and effectively head off harm to the public before it occurs. Our plan keeps the public at the forefront of our decision making. Their interests will continue to come first while ensuring we treat our regulated parties fairly through our processes.

We need time to make changes successfully and sustainably. So, we've set this plan for ten years. Typically, we will continue to act only where the data and regulatory intelligence is in place and evidence shows there will be a benefit for prevention, compliance, or response. But one of the lessons for us from the COVID-19 pandemic is that sometimes we must act when the evidence is still evolving. Because we know there are changes ahead, we want to stay flexible in our approach. Our strategic plan will change as we review our progress and continue our cultural safety and risk-based, right touch regulator journey.

I'm looking forward to achieving the challenges set out for us in this strategic plan, including the challenges we're setting for everyone to develop cultural awareness, embed te Tiriti and adopt mātauranga Māori informed approaches and decision making.

Cultural safety is a component of patient safety. It is one of the most ambitious and critical initiatives in this plan. For me, it's exciting to see my team's enthusiasm and preparedness to branch out and grow on this journey.

We will need to make some operational changes to give the plan its best chance of success. I will work closely with Te Kaunihera to ensure costs remain proportionate for practitioners and appropriate for Te Kaunihera.

Being supported by a motivated team gives me confidence that our processes and the implementation of any changes and improvements we make will be as timely, effective, and efficient as they can be for everyone impacted by the decisions we make and the work we do.

Heoi anō



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Marie MacKay'.

Marie MacKay
Chief Executive

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Strategic plan overview



Our vision		The public are safe, healthy, and empowered to participate in their health care								
Our regulatory role and purpose		To protect public health and safety by ensuring oral health professionals are safe, competent and fit to practise								
Our strategic objective		Safe oral health care, including culturally safe care for Aotearoa New Zealand								
To achieve our objective, we will focus on		Giving effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi the Treaty of Waitangi	Continuing to build on strong regulatory foundations	Enabling competent and safe oral health practice	Working with oral health practitioners to deliver culturally safe oral health care	Better understanding patients’ oral health care experience	Learning, sharing and educating collaboratively	Contributing to the wider health sector and regulatory systems		
Our strategic outcomes		We will set and measure a series of immediate and intermediate performance goals to keep us on track towards achieving these long term strategic outcomes		Māori, patients, practitioners, public and government have trust and confidence in Te Kaunihera the Council		Patients, whānau, hapū and iwi receive culturally safe oral health care		Oral health care enables the public and whānau to improve their wellbeing outcomes	Regulated parties encourage professional improvement	Te Kaunihera the Council is a credible regulator
Our strategic initiatives		How we will achieve our goals		Improving health equity and cultural safety		Preventing and responding to harm		Strengthening our regulatory intelligence		
				We will strategically partner with others to improve health equity. We will support improved patient outcomes through <i>E Tipu e Rea</i> so regulated parties become culturally safe		We will enhance our protection of public health and safety with a new Compliance Framework that clearly sets out how we regulate underpinned by te Tiriti o Waitangi the Treaty of Waitangi		We will develop a data strategy to ensure we make evidence-based decisions, and develop a risk-based capability		
Our values		What’s most important to our work		Respect		Integrity		Collaboration		

Executive summary

This strategic plan builds on previous progress and achievements and strives to better protect public safety through strengthened regulatory practice, compliance, collaboration and a new focus on cultural safety.

We started our journey in 2015

Te Kaunihera's 2015–21 strategic plan put in place right-touch regulation and laid foundations for us to become a risk-based regulator.

We focused our effort on becoming more effective by developing robust and efficient processes. We completed several major strategic projects including:

- our Standards Framework
- online services for practitioners
- improved financial systems and reporting
- our new recertification programme.

Public health and safety is why we regulate

This strategic plan sets out where we're heading.

Our regulatory role and purpose has not changed. We are continuing to protect public health and safety first.

Two important factors impact on safe care for patients:

- regulated parties who comply with regulatory requirements and provide competent and safe, including culturally safe, care
- Te Kaunihera understanding the extent of patient harm, making well-informed, evidence-based decisions, and collaborating and sharing information where appropriate.

Keeping these factors in mind, we have developed this new strategic plan for 2022–2032 to build on our previous achievements.

Our new focus

While our new strategic objective keeps our previous vision in sharp focus, in this plan, we move forward and:

- introduce long term outcomes to better reflect a deeper understanding of the impacts of our work and the positive difference we can make
- seek to gain a greater understanding of patients' views and their experience of oral health care
- introduce new strategic initiatives focused on cultural safety, preventing and responding to harm, improving health equity and strengthening our regulatory intelligence
- refine our values.

Our strategic plan 2022–2032

This plan does not change our strategic direction, but it does change how we work so that we can give effect to te Tiriti and better support our health and regulatory systems.

Our vision, regulatory role and purpose

Vision

The public are safe, healthy, and empowered to participate in their health care.

This vision sets out the ambitious result we ultimately want to achieve. By focusing on patients, practitioners and the wider health and regulatory systems, we have the potential to make a positive difference to patient outcomes that extends beyond safe oral health care.

Regulatory role and purpose

Legislation and government expectations heavily influence our regulatory role and purpose.

Our primary purpose is set out in section 3 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (the Act):

- to protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing for mechanisms to ensure that health practitioners are competent and fit to practice their professions.

We must also meet the performance expectations set by Government. These expectations inform our regulatory role to protect public health and safety.

The Ministry of Health now reviews our regulatory performance under the Act. We are required to assure the public that oral health practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand are meeting the Act's requirements and any new health regulatory practice changes introduced from time to time.

Our strategic plan is also influenced by other legislation, government priorities, societal expectations and changes in professional practice. Some examples are:

- Aotearoa New Zealand's regulatory environment changes including responses to regulatory failure
- relevant actions from Whakamaui | Māori Health Action Plan 2020–2025
- innovations in technology, emerging trends and new ways of delivering oral health care
- the COVID-19 pandemic response
- increased focus on oral health care price and inequities
- health and disability sector reforms.



Our strategic objective

Safe oral health care,
including culturally
safe care for Aotearoa
New Zealand

Our strategic objective, outcomes, and initiatives

Our strategic objective

Our strategic objective reflects a whole-of-system view that includes the patient experience of oral health care. To achieve this objective and make a positive difference to patients through credible and sustainable regulatory practice, we will focus on:



Giving effect to te Tiriti

To give effect to te Tiriti, we are making changes in our governance arrangements, and the policies and procedures for carrying out our statutory purpose. Our approach with this kaupapa is to take practitioners with us to achieve our te Tiriti aspirations over time.



Enabling competent and safe oral health practice

We use risk-based, right touch regulation to protect the public and ensure our regulated parties are practising competently and safely.



Continuing to build on strong regulatory foundations

Since 2015, we made good progress on regulatory initiatives for entry to the profession including the Standards Framework, accreditation standards, undergraduate competencies, and individual assessments.

The new registration and case management system, as well as the new recertification programme, provide us with greater assurance of competent and safe practice, ongoing learning, and regulatory leadership.

We want to maintain our focus on further building and completing these strong regulatory foundations. Although we've made a start, we recognise more work is needed to complete the recertification programme requirements and to protect and promote Māori, public and patient health and safety.





Working with oral health practitioners to deliver culturally safe oral health care

We propose a partnership approach working with others to build cultural capability and confidence so oral health practitioners' progress to culturally safe practice is supported and successful.



Better understanding patients' oral health care experience

Aotearoa New Zealand regulatory agencies are increasingly using outcomes and data to inform how regulation impacts their end-customers (the public). Focusing more on the public, as well as the parties we regulate helps mitigate regulatory failure.



Learning, sharing and educating collaboratively

We can learn from how others regulate, the parties we regulate, and the public. Because of our new registration and case management system we can grow our regulatory intelligence. By better understanding and learning we can further evolve our risk-based practice and share what we learn.



Contributing to the wider health sector and regulatory systems

We will work proactively and collaboratively with other regulatory authorities and agencies as stewards of the health regulatory system. We will be impacted by the proposed changes to Aotearoa New Zealand's health and disability system. We have a role to support the new system through our focus on safe oral health care.

Our strategic outcomes

We have set five long term strategic outcomes that we will work towards:

- Māori, patients, practitioners, public and government have trust and confidence in Te Kaunihera
- patients, whānau, hapū and iwi receive culturally safe oral health care
- oral health care enables the public and whānau to improve their wellbeing outcomes
- regulated parties encourage professional improvement
- Te Kaunihera is a credible regulator.

To keep us on track towards achieving these long term strategic outcomes, we will set and measure a series of immediate and intermediate performance goals.

These performance measures are also a tool for ensuring our actions stay focused on what will make a difference to the public.

Our strategic initiatives

While we work towards our long term outcomes, we can't lose sight of the essential services and support we routinely provide.

This strategic plan prioritises the work we need to do to balance credible and sustainable regulatory practice with achieving our strategic objective and long term outcomes.

To better protect and promote the health and safety of Māori, the public and patients we've begun working on a compliance framework, competence and prevention programmes, and a data strategy, with more work to do in the areas of prevention, accountability, and remediation.



Improving health equity and cultural safety

We will strategically partner with others to improve health equity.

We will support improved patient outcomes through *E Tipu e Rea* so Te Kaunihera, practitioners, and programmes we accredit become culturally safe.

Through strategic partnerships we will work to support Te Kaunihera and its regulated parties to transition to:

- be culturally competent
- become culturally safe
- acknowledge our collective responsibility.

We have started our cultural safety journey. Initially, this work focuses on learning and education for Te Kaunihera and regulated parties.

We will continue to complete this work and where necessary, integrate these into the three strategic initiatives we have identified.

While each strategic initiative stands alone, they will also overlap as we work on them concurrently. For example, strengthening our regulatory intelligence and developing the data strategy will inform and impact on the new compliance framework and cultural safety initiatives.



Preventing and responding to harm

We will protect public health and safety with a new Compliance Framework that clearly sets out how we regulate underpinned by te Tiriti.

The Compliance Framework will:

- better protect and improve our understanding of harm, including cultural harm
- increase transparency about how we regulate
- improve our response to risks of harm and harm when it occurs.



Strengthening our regulatory intelligence

We will develop a data strategy to ensure we make evidence-based decisions, and monitor and report our own progress.

Developing a data strategy will support our other strategic initiatives. It will ensure we can monitor our progress, grow our regulatory intelligence to understand harm, and meet our reporting obligations.

Our values

Our values are an important feature of our strategic plan and support how we operate. They encapsulate what's important to us.

Our values inform how we work regardless of whether we are working with patients, regulated parties, or other agencies. We have a dedicated team who work hard to meet the needs of a wide range of stakeholders. Our staff apply our values consistently and demonstrate the behaviours



Respect

- We honour Māori as tangata whenua and commit to understanding te Ao Māori
- We treat all people fairly, with empathy, and without personal favour or bias
- We are supportive of people's dignity and rights
- We support, and are accountable to each other in a considerate way
- We recognise and celebrate our successes



Integrity

- We are honest and fair
- We use risk-based right touch principles
- We respond in ways that are equitable for the circumstances



Collaboration

- We work with others for a shared purpose
- We actively listen and consider feedback
- We do our jobs well to enable us to build and sustain our relationships

Implementation

Our strategic plan is a living plan. We'll need to regularly review our progress and adjust if something isn't working and if it is the right thing to do.

Monitoring, reporting, and making changes as we go

This plan is supported with a work programme to spread the effort and cost of regulatory improvement over time. We report to stakeholders on our activities in our annual report and advise changes to the strategic plan when we consult on budget, fees, and levies every year. The data strategy will enable us to develop outcome measures and a stronger reporting dashboard.

Branching out and growing our capability

We will need to make some key capability shifts to implement our strategic plan, including:

- investing in our capability and the capability of regulated parties for cultural safety
- investing in our people so that we have a thriving regulatory culture with teams that work collaboratively
- ensuring our processes are well supported so that we have robust and consistent decision making
- developing our business intelligence, including continuing to get the most out of our new registration and financial management system
- building trusted and valued relationships to ensure we can collaborate effectively.



Dental Council
Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho