

Media Release

Home and Community Health Association

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Home Support Sector Seeks Voice in Pay and Travel Solutions

The Home and Community Health Association (HCHA), the peak body which represents home-based care providers across Aotearoa, is urging the Government to include providers in its ongoing work to fix long-standing issues with pay and travel reimbursements for support workers.

While HCHA welcomes recent ministerial statements indicating that Health New Zealand is exploring improvements to the travel payment system, the Association cautions that without direct sector involvement, changes risk ignoring the reality of delivering care on the ground. “Decisions must be made in collaboration with the people doing the work, with direct operational insight,” said Lisa Foster, CEO of HCHA. “Any solution that excludes provider voices risks being incomplete or unworkable.”

HCHA acknowledges the Government’s growing commitment to strengthening home-based care. However, the Association emphasises that meaningful collaboration with officials advising Ministers is critical. Policy must reflect the realities of service delivery.

“Support workers provide much needed care in homes across the motu, including in rural and remote areas. They are not based in central offices where they can simply ‘pop in’ to pick up a car,” said Foster. “They need to be fairly reimbursed for using their own vehicles.”

“Services are scheduled according to people’s needs and preferences — for some, critical care must be delivered at a certain time and we all have preferred times of day to shower and eat,” Foster continued. “Imagine trying to shoehorn all those needs into a rigid, centralised vehicle rostering system with care delivered when it suits the system, not the person and their needs. We don’t think the Government would want that approach to caring for our vulnerable and elderly communities.”

Without substantial Government investment in a new, fit-for-purpose model of care, it is simply not feasible.

The recent removal of the sector’s pay equity claim for 65,000 Care and Support Workers has only intensified the challenge, it has eliminated one of the few formal pathways to address wage gaps and years of systemic underfunding.

HCHA continues to advocate for:

- **Inclusion in all relevant national workstreams, analysis, and policy development**
- **Funding that reflects the true cost of travel and supports fair, sustainable pay for support workers**
- **Urgent action to address pay parity between government-employed support workers and those employed by organisations contracted to, and paid by, government.**
- **Leadership that recognises home-based care as a public health service requiring adequate investment**

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Background: The Home and Community Health Association (HCHA) represents providers of home and community health services and is the national voice that promotes and advances excellence, partnership and sustainability for the sector. HCHA's vision is sustainable, equitable, high-quality provision of home and community health services across Aotearoa.