

Highlights

- **Mental health support at every primary and intermediate school and continued roll out of nurses in school programme in secondary schools ensuring all students have access to the support they need**
- **Additional funding of \$200 million to reduce planned care waiting lists**
- **Significant \$200 million funding boost for PHARMAC**
- **Dental health grants increased for people on lower incomes**
- **20 additional mobile dental clinics to increase adolescent access to dental care**
- **Expansion of nurse-family partnerships across the country and additional respite beds for maternal mental health**
- **Double the number of funded cochlear implants to 160 per year**
- **Establishing a rheumatic fever register**

New Zealand's response to COVID-19 has been world-leading, highlighting once again the importance of a strong, well-funded public health system. We made record investments in health over the last three years, playing catch-up after years of neglect. We inherited a system characterised by glaring health inequalities and hospitals and health facilities that were severely depleted by historic under-investment.

We will build on our record of investment in New Zealand's health services, tackling inequities, expanding mental health services, rebuilding rundown hospitals, and scaling up our successful national contract tracing system as part of our elimination strategy to COVID-19.

Labour's achievements to date

In response to COVID-19

There was no playbook for dealing with COVID-19 but our plan to combat the virus is working – the results speak for themselves. Our strategy of going hard and early with border closure and lockdown, and then continuing to take preventative measures to stop the spread with our alert level system is world leading. The success of our team of five million means we're coming out safer and stronger than most other countries.

To continue to keep New Zealanders safe, we've implemented one of the strictest systems in the world with managed isolation and quarantine at the border, high rates of testing, and robust contact tracing. We have also invested an additional \$2 billion in the health fight against COVID-19 to shore up our borders, protect our health workers with the right PPE and ramp up our testing and contact tracing systems.

Before the COVID crisis

New Zealand has a good health and disability system overall but it is clear we have significant systemic issues when it comes to improving health outcomes for those most in need. We have world class doctors and nurses, but our system is siloed and complex for patients to navigate when they need help the most. We undertook a comprehensive review of New Zealand's health and disability system which came up with

a series of recommendations that sets out a path for a stronger, more sustainable system with clear lines of accountability that is more responsive to the needs of local communities.

We've taken mental health seriously by making record investments to make it easier for people to get help early. Already we're:

- Rolling out free frontline mental health services at GP clinics, youth, iwi and Pacific health providers to support people to deal with issues before they become major problems
- Delivering dedicated mental health and wellbeing support in schools throughout Christchurch and Kaikōura through Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow programme
- Investing significantly in new and existing neglected mental health and addiction facilities, like in Hamilton, Tairāwhiti, Palmerston North and Christchurch
- Re-establishing the Mental Health Commission to provide independent insight and leadership on mental health and addiction policies
- Establishing the Suicide Prevention Office and plan.

Since we came into Government, we've also:

- Made record investments in DHBs to relieve some of the pressure they've been under
- Made record capital investments of \$3.5 billion to rebuild our rundown hospitals and health facilities
- Made visiting the doctor cheaper or free for nearly 600,000 New Zealanders
- Increased disability support funding by more than \$800 million
- Launched new Cancer Action Plan and created the independent Cancer Control Agency.

And we boosted funded PHARMAC so it can buy new cancer medicines, invested in infrastructure like rebuilding Dunedin Hospital, funded pay increases for nurses and mental health workers, and strengthened our health workforce by adding more doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health workers.

Objective 1: Keeping New Zealanders safe from COVID-19

Labour will continue protecting New Zealanders from the devastating global effects of COVID-19 by:

- Prioritising a health-led response to COVID-19 that puts New Zealanders lives front and centre of any decision-making. We will continue to refine and adapt our public health measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 based on the latest international evidence and science
- Continuing to invest in a strong public health response to COVID-19, including promoting the importance of basic health measures, and continuing to increase our PPE supplies and distribution
- Investing in and maintaining the stockpiles of hospital and laboratory equipment required for a large scale response
- Labour will prioritise surveillance and testing to enable early identification of COVID-19 and prevent and limit its spread in the community.

The Surveillance Plan and Testing Strategy includes comprehensive testing of arrivals into New Zealand, border staff, symptomatic people in the community, and a range of surveillance activities, such as wide

testing within a specific group of people if they're deemed higher risk. We have continuously strengthened our border measures to ensure we minimise the risk of further spreading of COVID-19 to New Zealand, including mandatory testing for border workers, daily health checks, PPE usage, appropriate cleaning, and social distancing.

- Labour will continue building up our contact tracing capability, both at a local and national level

In Government, Labour has implemented a range of contact tracing methods backed by public health experts which have proven effective. In the recent resurgence of COVID-19 cases, we've achieved the gold standard of 80 percent of close contacts associated with a positive case being identified and contacted in 48 hours. We developed a national information system to ensure a nationwide regional Public Health Units could work collaboratively and have developed the COVID tracing app which has had over 2.5 million registrations. Labour will continue investing in contact tracing to further strengthen our ability to contact trace more people, faster.

- Labour will continue to ensure international arrivals are isolated until we know they're safe

For as long as is needed, all arrivals from overseas will need to enter managed isolation for two weeks so New Zealand can stay safe from further COVID-19 transmission. We'll continue to test every arrival, and keep our quarantine facilities safe and secure. We will ensure that the number of managed isolation and quarantine facilities is in step with our capacity to safely manage the demand and uphold the integrity of our border.

Labour will also:

- Ensure New Zealand secures a safe and effective vaccine (supported by a strong national immunisation program), including working with international partners and investing in local research and innovation that contributes towards finding a cure.

Labour will continue to actively contribute to domestic and international efforts to secure a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19. We already have a strong vaccine strategy that enables us to work closely with our international partners on all aspects of vaccine development, distribution and use. We will maintain our approach of refining our regulatory settings to promote research and enable the manufacture and timely distribution of a safe vaccine.

Objective 2: Building a Stronger Health System

Every New Zealander has the right to access world class health care. In Government, Labour undertook a comprehensive review of our health system to ensure that all New Zealanders have access to services that meet their needs. The Health and Disability System Review recommendations are the next steps to ending the postcode lottery in healthcare.

- Labour will reform the health system drawing on the recommendations of the Health and Disability System Review so that every New Zealander can get high quality health care when and where they need it

Labour is committed to a long-term programme of reform to build a stronger New Zealand Health and Disability System. The changes will take time, including to allow for the training and workforce development we'll need, but they'll help us make sure every New Zealander can get high quality health care when and where they need it.

In Government, we have established a transition unit to get the work underway. Labour will continue the implementation of the reforms.

- Labour will continue to roll out its increased investment in healthcare to ensure New Zealanders can access procedures in a timely manner close to where they live, including \$200 million of additional funding to reduce waiting lists for planned surgery and diagnostic services

Labour will remain responsive to the ongoing COVID situation and prioritise the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders. We will build on our record of increased investment in health care to ensure New Zealanders can access services and procedures when and where they need them. To date, we have invested \$283 million to make sure hospitals catch up on any deferred treatment as a result of COVID-19 disruption. We have cleared nearly all of it. But there is always more to do, so we will invest an additional \$200 million so that hospitals will continue to deliver more treatment for more people..

- Labour will establish a Māori Health Authority

The Review of the Health and Disability System recommended the establishment of a Māori Health Authority which Labour will implement. COVID-19 further highlighted the benefit of having Māori more directly involved in our healthcare system to reduce Māori health inequities. We will work in collaboration with tangata whenua in establishing a Māori Health Authority built on principles of Te Tiriti and that encapsulates matauranga Māori in its decision making. Its work will be influenced by the progress already made through Whakamaua, the Māori Health Action Plan, maintaining an ongoing commitment to ensuring the health and disability system is fair, sustainable and delivers more equitable outcomes for Māori.

- Labour will establish a Public Health Agency

Labour will establish a Public Health Agency to provide national leadership and consistency around all core aspects of public health, including health protection, health promotion, and screening. The agency will work alongside the re-established Public Health Advisory Committee, as recommended through the Health and Disability System Review.

- Labour will invest an additional \$200 million into PHARMAC

Labour has a strong record in investing in our medicines budget. Over the last three years we've boosted the budget for PHARMAC by 20 percent, which has benefited more than 200,000 people, increasing access to modern medicines and new cancer drugs. We will build on this record of investment by putting in an additional \$200 million to widen New Zealanders' access to the latest medicines.

Labour will also:

- Make population health the cornerstone of the system, with a networked approach to primary and community services so people can access high quality healthcare locally
- Commit to a collaborative process of reform which will see a reduction in the number of district health boards over the next five years, maintaining the level of care provided, while reducing administrative costs and duplication
- Establish an Aged Care Commissioner to act as an independent watchdog across the aged care sector and provide leadership on wider social and economic issues that affect seniors
- Complete bargaining in good faith to quickly achieve pay equity for nurses and for district health board administration and clerical staff
- Oversee a consistent approach to bargaining to achieve pay parity for health workforces
- Identify and support general practices that wish to move to a community-owned model.

Objective 3: Rollout of Expanded Mental Health Services

- Labour will invest \$151 million to extend the rollout of Mana Ake – Stronger Together beyond the Canterbury region over the next five years ensuring every primary and intermediate age child has access to dedicated mental health professionals

Since 2018, the Mana Ake programme has provided mental health support to 5,694 children in the Canterbury region. Labour will expand Mana Ake throughout the rest of the country over the next five years and ensure that every primary and intermediate age child has access to mental health support. This national rollout will allow specialist support to be tailored to the needs of children along with their families, schools and communities, and ensure that in those critical early years, young people get all the help they need to grow up safe, healthy and happy.

- Labour will invest an additional \$20 million to expand nurse family partnerships

Parental mental health and addiction issues can have substantial lifelong impacts on children. Nurse family partnerships provide enhanced support to parents and whānau who have mental health or addiction needs during pregnancy and for the first two years of a child's life or following a stillbirth. Supporting more parents through this programme will also play an important part in keeping at-risk children safe. This investment will provide an additional five sites around the country.

- Labour will increase the number of respite beds to support maternal mental health

Respite beds provide a safe, home-like environment for mothers to receive post-natal mental health support. It prioritises supporting mothers to stay with their babies, and can include home visits if additional support is needed. There are currently approximately 25 beds around the country. Labour will invest \$1.6m for an additional 12 beds. Labour will also undertake a stocktake of maternal mental health services around the country to develop a national pathway for access that is consistent wherever you are in New Zealand.

- Labour will continue to make mental health a priority by implementing our \$1.9 billion response package to deliver on *He Ara Oranga Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction*, which includes rolling out new and strengthened mental health and addiction services, training more qualified mental health workers and building new facilities

Prevention is better than cure in all areas of health, including mental health, which is why Labour committed to this plan as part of the landmark Wellbeing Budget in 2019. Every New Zealander knows someone affected by a mental health challenge. Labour will continue the five-year rollout of services across New Zealand, provided in general practices (GP), kaupapa Māori, Pacific, and youth settings so that all New Zealanders will have access to free mental health support when and where they need it, including right at their local GP clinic. As the COVID recovery kicks into gear, looking out for our mental health is just as important as ever.

We will also:

- Expand and improve on suicide prevention efforts and better respond to the needs of people bereaved by suicide
- Enhance the quality and capacity of specialist Alcohol and other Drug services by providing more home and community services and peer support across the country
- Fully fund the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission to enable it to provide an independent assessment of the Government's work in mental health.

Objective 4: Rebuilding our Hospitals

- Labour will continue our programme of major investment in rebuilding hospitals around the country

If we want to have a world-leading healthcare system, we have to get the basics right. That's why we're rebuilding and upgrading hospitals and fixing our health system's critical infrastructure after years of neglect. Under National, infrastructure funding dried up with only \$1.2 billion spent over nine years. This meant that hospitals and facilities in dire need of an upgrade were left to deteriorate. We needed a plan to support a pipeline of maintenance and investment of our hospital facilities across the country, which is why in our first term we released the first ever national plan on the state of New Zealand's hospital buildings.

In just three years, Labour has invested \$3.5 billion into New Zealand hospitals to provide modern facilities and safe infrastructure for people needing medical care. This includes substantial investments in new hospital facilities, and investing in health infrastructure community clinics.

We are delivering:

- A \$300m redevelopment of Taranaki Base Hospital with a new East Wing for a range of critical and acute services
- Four new theatres, a radiology hub and a fully integrated breast screening service in Manukau Health Park for South Aucklanders
- A new elective surgery unit at North Shore Hospital
- A new stroke unit for Auckland City Hospital and a half-billion dollar buildings upgrade

- An upgrade to Middlemore Hospital to fix leaky buildings and a new radiology campus at Manukau SuperClinic
- Brand new specialist mental health facilities at Canterbury DHB's Hillmorton campus
- A new in-patient mental health and addiction unit at Hauora Tairāwhiti Gisborne Hospital
- A new \$100 million mental health facility in Hamilton
- A new hospital in Dunedin's city centre which will be one of the largest builds in the region.

Objective 5: Improving Access to Oral Health Care

Labour believes that cost should not be a barrier to accessing oral health care.

- Labour will invest \$176 million to improve access to dental care for people on the lowest incomes with urgent oral health needs by increasing the maximum Work and Income grant for emergency oral health care from \$300 to \$1,000

Labour believes that the amount provided for an emergency grant should actually cover the costs of urgent dental work. The rate of Special Needs Grants for dental treatment has not moved in over two decades, despite the rising costs. That's why we will improve access to dental care for people on the lowest incomes with urgent oral health needs by increasing the maximum Special Needs Grant for emergency oral health care from \$300 to \$1,000. This will be available to those who meet the cash and asset thresholds for the Special Needs Grant. The New Zealand Dental Association recommended extending urgent dental grants, which was also recommended by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group. The Ministry of Social Development will work locally with dental providers and DHBs to establish a regional preferred supplier list, where possible.

- Labour will improve access to dental care by investing in 20 additional mobile dental clinics to make it more accessible for children and young people

Despite being free of charge for under 18 year olds, there are still inequalities for those using oral health services. For example, only 44 percent of Māori adolescent children have accessed dental care over the last year, compared with 78 percent for NZ European. Mobile clinics provide access to high quality care dental care for children and young people, especially for more remote areas and high needs areas. There are currently 156 mobile dental clinics across New Zealand. Labour will improve access to oral health care for children and young people by investing \$37.5 million for 20 additional mobile dental clinics with full services. These additional clinics will be focused on hard to reach areas where access to services is currently limited.

Objective 6: Reduce Barriers to Accessing Healthcare

Labour believes cost shouldn't be a barrier to accessing quality healthcare.

- Labour will invest \$28 million to double the number of publicly funded cochlear implant procedures for those that are hearing impaired to 160 each year

Cochlear implants benefit people with lower levels of hearing loss yet many people have to wait for their hearing to get worse before they can access this transformative intervention. Currently there are only about 80 available each year through the Ministry of Health. We will invest in an additional 80 cochlear implants annually bringing the total number of funded cochlear implants to around 160 per year. This will allow recipients to access further opportunities in training and employment and increase their access to the community by empowering them to live good lives contributing to their overall wellbeing.

- Labour will invest \$3 million to ensure every DHB has access to a portable paediatric retinal camera to address one of the leading causes of preventable blindness

Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) is a disease of the eye affecting premature infants and is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in New Zealand. The portable cameras needed to screen premature and vulnerable children are not available consistently around the country, which is why Labour will invest \$3 million into ensuring every DHB has access to a portable paediatric retinal camera. The availability of a paediatric retinal camera will not only enable timely assessment and help in prevention of avoidable blindness in premature babies, but will also allow treatment and monitoring of paediatric retinal disorders to minimise vision loss in our most vulnerable children.

- Labour will establish a rheumatic fever register

Rheumatic fever continues to disproportionately impact Māori and Pacific children and young people and while we have provided additional funding for prevention, we know more needs to be done to stop rheumatic fever, and for helping to manage the care of those who have it. Labour will establish a rheumatic fever register to assist in administering ongoing and regular follow-up medication to people who have had rheumatic fever, including reminders for the patient and their health providers. A nationwide register will also ensure continuity of care, including for when people change DHBs. Labour will also take the advantage of the unique opportunity presented by COVID-19 by ensuring that those being tested for COVID-19 who fall into the high-risk groups for rheumatic fever are also tested for Group A Streptococcus (GAS) bacteria – which can cause a throat infection that develops into rheumatic fever.

- Labour will continue the rollout of the successful nurses in school programme

Labour will continue to expand school-based health services to all secondary schools over five year so that all students will have access to mental health, sexual health services, and a universal health, disability development check-in at Year 9. Already, 80,000 students have access to a nurse in deciles 1 to 5 schools and we will expand this to 240,000 secondary school students. We will be expanding this programme in tranches, starting with the schools with the greatest need. This initiative supports the mental health of young New Zealanders and reduces barriers to primary care.

- Labour will work with the dementia sector to support the Dementia Action Plan

The number of Kiwis diagnosed with dementia is expected to triple in coming years, which will have an impact on four out of five people and cost the economy some \$5 billion a year by 2050. In response, three dementia sector organisations have collaborated to develop the first ever Dementia Action Plan for New Zealand. Labour will work with the sector to implement the plan with a focus on prevention, support for whanau to navigate support services, building community acceptance, and strengthening capability in the sector.

- Labour will invest \$20 million to support the roll out of Ola Manuia: the Pacific Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2020–2025

Overall, Pacific peoples in New Zealand experience significant and long-standing health inequities compared with many other groups. Achieving Pacific health equity is about addressing the cause. It is about improving how Pacific peoples are treated when they access services, and it is about getting the level of engagement, and quality of care and support, right. This investment will go towards further increasing the number of Pacific peoples in the health workforce through scholarships and funded training, supporting Pacific health care providers to deliver culturally responsive forms of care, and funding additional initiatives that help to remove barriers to access healthcare for Pacific peoples.

- Labour will implement a *Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan*

Labour in Government will continue our strong work on tobacco control by delivering a *Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan* as an immediate priority. The plan will directly tackle current inequities by focusing on better support for Māori and Pacific whanau to be smokefree, ensuring more children and young people never start smoking, and by introducing restrictions on the retail availability of cigarettes and tobacco in our communities.

Fiscal Summary - Labour's Commitments in Health

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 and outyears	Four year operating cost	Capital Expenditure
Description	\$(m)	\$(m)	\$(m)	\$(m)	\$(m)	\$(m)
Planned care catch-up funding	50	50	50	50	200	
Health system oversight - Māori Health Authority, Public Health Agency and Aged Care Commissioner	30	30	30	30	120	
PHARMAC purchasing	50	50	50	50	200	
Mana Ake nationwide five-year roll-out	10	28.5	47	65.5	151	
Nurse-family partnerships expanded roll-out	5	5	5	5	20	
Respite beds	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	6.4	
Dental health grants	44	44	44	44	176	
Mobile dental clinics	7	7	7	7	28	9.5
Cochlear implants	7	7	7	7	28	
Paediatric retinal camera	-	-	-	-	-	3
Rheumatic fever register	1	1	1	1	4	
Nurses in schools rollout	4	10	16	22	52	
Implementing Ola Manuia: Pacific Health and Wellbeing Action Plan	5	5	5	5	20	
TOTAL Fiscal Commitments	214.6	239.1	263.6	288.1	1,005.4	12.5