

26 November 2025

All Members of Parliament
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

RE: Regulatory Standards Act

Dear Members of Parliament, tēnā koutou katoa,

We, the undersigned, representing prominent medical colleges and public health organisations of Aotearoa write to convey our extreme disappointment and concern that the Regulatory Standards Act has passed at its third reading and call for the act to be repealed. The regulatory framework established by this act will negatively affect health and the environment for generations of New Zealanders. We must ensure we honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and safeguard the wellbeing of our people, today and in the future. Our mokopuna deserve better.

As healthcare practitioners and advocates, we work daily with populations experiencing severe health inequities. The clinical evidence is clear: social determinants account for approximately 80% of health outcomes. These include access to clean air and water, uncontaminated food, safe housing, and environmental protections. All of these require regulatory frameworks based on public health evidence, not economic efficiency.

This act compounds the threat to evidence-based health policy alongside the Government's review of the *Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022* - a review that *all* medical colleges have opposed on clinical grounds because it threatens Health Sector Principles designed to address health inequities based on decades of public health research.

The act would end specialised mental health services for Māori, Pacific peoples, and other vulnerable groups because its "equal application" principle treats targeted equity programmes as discrimination. Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission data shows that when kaupapa Māori mental health funding decreases, suicide and seclusion rates increase.

We have high suicide rates, high levels of child poverty, whānau violence and high incarceration rates. We have tamariki experiencing homelessness and food insecurity. We have gross inequities in our country, and the act is designed to quash legislated equity-focused action. We know this will cause direct and intergenerational harm to those already struggling in health, housing, education, and all socio-economic realms. These are not statistics - these are the whānau we see every day.

Through the consultation process, colleges and advocate organisations shared and submitted evidence:

- The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners warns that the Act significantly weakens Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations by threatening Māori health equity at a time when persistent inequities already reflect systemic failures in policy, service design, and delivery. The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners has previously highlighted evidence on the social determinants of health, stressing, for example, that

mental illness cannot be effectively treated while ignoring root causes such as poverty and housing insecurity. The Act undermines protections designed to address these determinants, putting Māori health outcomes at further risk.

- The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists submitted evidence on patient safety implications, concerns about professional regulation standards, and an analysis of how economic efficiency principles could override clinical safety standards.
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists submitted evidence from Te Hiringa Mahara (Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission) showing that when kaupapa Māori mental health funding reduces, suicide and seclusion rates increase. The data shows that Māori death rates from alcohol are more than twice that of non-Māori, and that this act could eliminate alcohol harm protections.
- The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons submitted evidence on public health priorities threatened by the act, concerns about the elimination of alcohol harm protections undermining health equity and environmental sustainability, and analysis of the increased burden on an already pressured healthcare system.
- The Public Health Association of New Zealand (PHANZ) submitted evidence on how the act would weaken Aotearoa New Zealand's ability to protect health, increase inequities, and undermine democratic decision-making.
- Platform Trust submitted evidence that the Act would weaken protections for collective wellbeing, mental health and addiction outcomes, and democratic accountability. It highlighted risks to Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, population health, and existing frameworks that safeguard vulnerable communities.
- The Wise Group submission called for a halt to the Regulatory Standards Act in its current form. The Act's narrow focus prioritises economic and property rights over social and community wellbeing, equity, and environmental protection. It fails to recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi; does not address the needs of vulnerable populations; and risks undermining democratic debate and civic participation. Our submission strongly urged an immediate halt to the Act, and for important changes to be made including meaningful consultation with Māori, Pacific, and the public to ensure it reflects the values and priorities of all New Zealanders.

In closing, we urge you to consider the far-reaching implications of the Regulatory Standards Act and the risks it poses to effective, accountable governance in Aotearoa New Zealand. We ask that you make a clear and public commitment to support its repeal at the earliest opportunity. Our democracy depends on laws that uphold transparency, fairness, and the wellbeing of all New Zealanders — not measures that undermine these principles. Your leadership on this issue will make a vital difference.

Respectfully submitted,

Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists
 Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
 The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
 The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
 NZ College of Musculoskeletal Medicine
 The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
 Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners
 The Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators
 New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine
 New Zealand College of Sexual and Reproductive Health
 The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
 Ora Taiao Aotearoa NZ Health and Climate Council
 The Public Health Association of New Zealand
 Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa New Zealand Nurses Organisation
 Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand
 New Zealand Drug Foundation
 Platform Trust
 Wise Group
 Māori Anaesthetists Network Aotearoa



Public Health Association
of New Zealand
Kāhui Hauora Tūmatanui
o Aotearoa

WISE TRUST
wisegroup.



Te Puna Whakaiti Pāmamae Kai Whakapiri
New Zealand Drug Foundation