

18<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
Finance and Expenditure Committee  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington



## **Submission on the Regulatory Standards Bill**

Tēnā koutou Finance and Expenditure Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Regulatory Standards Bill. Whānau Āwhina Plunket does not support the proposed Bill and recommends it does not progress to a second reading. We are concerned about the unintended consequences of the Regulatory Standards Bill, and that it may lead to inequities of access and health outcomes for populations with high health needs.

At Whānau Āwhina Plunket we have walked alongside families for 117 years and are privileged to support whānau in their homes, in their community, and through our PlunketLine service. Te Tiriti o Waitangi underpins our commitment as a treaty partner to tāngata whenua; and more so to the health and wellbeing of our pēpi, tamariki and their whānau. We acknowledge that some communities have higher health needs, and we are committed to delivering our services equitably.

We are concerned that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not considered in the Bill. The proposed Bill lacks clear intention and mechanisms to support meeting responsibilities to Te Tiriti and ensuring legislation and regulatory functions do not further increase inequities of access to healthcare services and health outcomes for whānau Māori. We note that the Waitangi Tribunal found that the Bill directly breaches te Tiriti o Waitangi due to the lack of meaningful engagement with Māori in the development of the Bill and recommended halting the progress of the Bill to allow the necessary meaningful engagement to occur.

The Bill of Rights Act has not been considered within the proposed Bill, and no provision for equity has been made. The impact of decisions made without considering these key principles could impact both directly and indirectly on health and social outcomes for communities we serve, especially those with the highest health needs. There must be measures in place to ensure that legislation and regulatory functions do not further widen inequities of access to healthcare services and health outcomes.

We would also like to raise a possible issue regarding the potential for commercial interests to be prioritised over public health. For example, in the case of future pandemics it is of utmost importance that regulation enables the health and wellbeing of all whānau to be prioritised over commercial interests. It is unclear whether this would be the case under the proposed Bill, and this must be addressed.

Additionally, we note that the Regulatory Impact Statement for the Regulatory Standards Bill recommended exploring other mechanisms for both improving standards for regulatory quality and strengthening the assurance function. We also note that only 0.33% of public submissions supported or partially supported the Bill. We suggest that other alternatives to strengthening regulation should be examined.

We want all tamariki in Aotearoa New Zealand to get the best start and we are concerned that the Regulatory Standards Bill as proposed does not support that. Whānau Āwhina Plunket does not support the Bill and recommends it does not progress to a second reading.

Ngā mihi  
Fiona Kingsford  
Manahautū, Chief Executive  
Whānau Āwhina Plunket

