

Submission: Pou Ora Pillars of Health



New Zealand
Speech-language
Therapists' Association

*Te Kāhui Kaiwhakatikatika
Reo Kōrero o Aotearoa*

To: Marama.Buck@collab.org.nz

From: New Zealand Speech-language
Therapists' Association (NZSTA)

Date: 14th May 2025

Feedback

The New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (NZSTA) welcomes the vision and intent of Pou Ora to create an equitable, integrated, and sustainable primary care model. The model's emphasis on cultural safety, proactive care, collaboration, and workforce development aligns with speech-language therapy's values and scope. SLTs work with whānau across the lifespan on communication, swallowing, and mealtime safety—areas intersect with all five pou, particularly in long-term condition management, child development, and neurorehabilitation.

However, we note that **speech-language therapists (and allied health more broadly) are not explicitly referenced** despite being critical contributors to team-based care. More significantly, **SLTs are not funded within primary care**; access remains fragmented and inconsistent, with most whānau navigating eligibility-based entry through health, education, ACC or private practice.

We encourage Collaborative Aotearoa to:

- **Name allied health explicitly** to ensure visibility and inclusion in future implementation

- **Advocate for the commissioning of SLT services within primary care MDTs,** particularly for prevention, early intervention, and long-term condition care
- **Include SLTs in workforce planning, pilot sites, and cultural safety initiatives,** where their contribution aligns with Pou Ora's goals.

Without structural and funding reform, the transformative potential of Pou Ora will remain out of reach for many whānau who would benefit from speech-language therapy but currently fall through the gaps.

Ngā mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Smolloy".

Siobhan Molloy
Executive Director
New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (NZSTA)

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