

Future of pathology services in Aotearoa – Position-on-a-page

Pathology Laboratories - Funded Sector

We all want the same thing; better health outcomes for all people of Aotearoa New Zealand, and with a specific focus on our most disadvantaged communities.

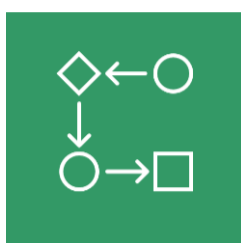
Our current laboratory sector

has served us well, but the way it has been structured has produced **geographical and service delivery inconsistencies**. With the current health reforms, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to set some new fundamentals in place that will move the sector closer to meeting Pae Ora aspirations.

Our future state

needs to be **consistent, patient-centred, smart, agile, and appropriately resourced** – with the public and private laboratory services partnering effectively towards a common goal.

How do we get there? Four areas of focus:



Service

A nationally consistent approach and standard of performance, designed with patients in mind.



Workforce

A well-trained, and sustainable workforce with life-long careers.



Structure

An efficient national sector structure, consistent on who delivers what and where.



Funding

A long-term sustainable funding model that caters for current and future needs.

	Key deliverable #1	Key deliverable #2	Key deliverable #3
 <p>Service</p>	<p>A nationally aligned approach to patient-empowered services</p> <p>NOW: Reporting is tailored to the needs of the clinician, not the understanding of the patient, and health monitoring is passive or reactive, not proactive.</p> <p>FUTURE: Diagnostic testing across different disciplines is easily accessible and provides appropriate information for patients and clinicians</p>	<p>Nationally consistent test lists, definitions, and standards</p> <p>NOW: Many inconsistencies in the way tests are defined, requested and funded, and there is no national standard test list.</p> <p>FUTURE: Definitive, consistent and current test list ensures patients can access the same tests, and their results mean the same thing, across the motu - a key driver to preventing post-code healthcare.</p>	<p>National performance metrics and service delivery KPIs</p> <p>NOW: Each laboratory works to different performance measures, and for some, there are no published performance measures at all.</p> <p>FUTURE: Nationally consistent performance standards would improve the quality and consistency of service outcomes for patients and clinicians and provide certainty for Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora.</p>
 <p>Workforce</p>	<p>National pay scale for lab workers</p> <p>NOW: Lack of pay parity puts pressure on recruitment and creates regional pockets of workforce shortages, leading to regular disruption to services for communities.</p> <p>FUTURE: Multi-employer collective agreements (MECA) support pay parity, ensures sustainable service provision, and gives people confidence in a life-long laboratory career.</p>	<p>National strategic partnerships for recruitment and training</p> <p>NOW: No clear career pathways for many roles, and an economy-wide competition for workers in service roles.</p> <p>FUTURE: Well-defined pathways for career progression and more flexible, on-the-job learning approaches, supported by a specific funding pool for training and capability development.</p>	<p>National strategy for attracting a more diverse workforce</p> <p>NOW: Pathology services both inside the laboratory and in the community do not have broad cultural representation which reflects the diverse communities we service.</p> <p>FUTURE: National campaign and pipeline to attract diverse cultures into the pathology sector, supported by partnerships with universities with a track record of cultivating diverse talent.</p>
 <p>Structure</p>	<p>Establish national laboratory governance</p> <p>NOW: Labs provide services to hospital specialist services, community, and public health, with no central point of governance and engagement with health leadership, leading to lack of direction, and further fragmentation.</p> <p>FUTURE: National governance mechanisms with public and private sector participation, to set and monitor performance measures, test lists and standards, and oversee relevant national laboratory strategies.</p>	<p>Unify laboratory services where appropriate</p> <p>NOW: In some locations, there are different labs servicing the same populations, or different labs both delivering various community services. This creates clinical risk, duplication, waste, system complexity and undermines economies of scale.</p> <p>FUTURE: Labs are consolidated to integrated services for hospital and community in regions that don't have them, and all community services are provided by the community contract holder - prevents duplication, reduces clinical risk and supports better patient outcomes.</p>	<p>Ensure long-term sustainable contract periods</p> <p>NOW: Contracts with a short-term view (less than 10 yrs) discourage significant investment in the laboratory service provision for communities including pathology innovation.</p> <p>FUTURE: Long term contact periods (10+ years) enable investment planning across all aspects of the laboratory service including buildings, workforce, equipment, IT infrastructure and patient-focused innovation.</p>
 <p>Funding</p>	<p>Build flexibility into capacity funding models for routine automated testing</p> <p>NOW: Capacity contracts are eroded with spikes in demand; new test programmes and service changes without appropriate or new funding support.</p> <p>FUTURE: Long term contracts that are flexible enough to enable investment and appropriate responses to changing operating conditions and regional and locality requirements.</p>	<p>Complex and new testing funded as fee-for-service</p> <p>NOW: Complex testing is less automated and has a relatively high labour and clinical component and may only be appropriate in some labs. The existing capacity contracts aren't fit for purpose for these tests.</p> <p>FUTURE: A fee-for-service funding model for complex and new testing, based on a well-defined understanding of the cost and described in a national test list</p>	<p>Funding scientific, technical, and service innovation</p> <p>NOW: Inconsistent approaches to how funds are made available for innovation, training, R&D and improving health outcomes.</p> <p>FUTURE: Specific future funding pool allocated as part of contracts enabling providers to invest in new tests, R&D and service and delivery improvements that will support Te Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) strategies. Funds are easily accessible, with accountability for achieving impact.</p>