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CMC statement on changes to Medical Council leadership

The Council of Medical Colleges (CMC) thanks Dr Rachele Love for her hard work as Chair of the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) and wishes her well for the future. CMC has valued our positive engagements with Dr Love and her contribution to the joint programme of work between MCNZ and medical colleges to support equitable health outcomes for all. We look forward to working with Dr Ken Clark as the new Chair.

Reports that the Minister of Health has not reappointed senior MCNZ leaders because of what he described as an “ideological agenda” are concerning. CMC recognises the Minister’s role in appointing MCNZ members. However, action taken on ideological grounds risks undermining the independence of the regulator responsible for protecting patient safety and maintaining public trust in the medical profession.

MCNZ plays a critical statutory role in setting standards, ensuring cultural competence¹, accrediting training, and safeguarding the public. The health system depends on it as a strong, stable, and independent institution that reflects the needs of the population. MCNZ must be able to carry out its statutory functions without political interference. Before setting standards, including the draft cultural competence and safety standards, MCNZ consults widely. CMC has found these consultations robust and MCNZ responsive to concerns raised.

Cultural safety is not ideological. It is evidence-based, internationally recognised, and central to good patient care. It improves communication, reduces harm, and strengthens trust. Its importance in New Zealand is heightened by our reliance on international medical graduates to staff our hospitals and health services.

CMC represents 18 medical colleges committed to high-quality, equitable care for all people of Aotearoa New Zealand. The colleges work closely together on a programme to support culturally safe healthcare in vocational training. We aim to improve outcomes for patients receiving specialist care and our approach is reinforced by the work of MCNZ. We will continue to champion high standards for vocational trainees and specialists, reflecting not only their technical skills but also how they deliver healthcare to patients.

CMC stands ready to work constructively with the Minister, MCNZ, and sector partners to ensure New Zealand maintains a clinically skilled, culturally competent and safe, and future-ready medical workforce. Patients, whānau, and communities deserve nothing less.

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