

# MEMORANDUM

**To** Chief Executive  
**CC** Director, Engagement and Implementation  
**From** Manager, Communications and External Relations  
**Subject** Engaging Whare PR for PR campaign on new diabetes medicines  
**Date** 10 June 2021

## Purpose

This memo seeks your approval to engage Whare PR to deliver a PR campaign targeting Māori communities about the new diabetes medicines. The indicative cost of the campaign is \$135,000 and would be covered by the equity budget.

## Background

Equitable access and use is one of our organisational strategic priorities. Research shows large and ongoing inequities in access to medicines. Māori are continuing to receive funded medicines in the community at a lower rate than non-Māori. Māori have significant barriers to accessing and using the funded medicines that are available. The focus of this strategic priority is on closing the equity gaps for medicines and related products we already fund.

Equity for Māori is also part of Te Whaioranga, our Māori responsiveness strategy. We want inequity in access to medicines for Māori to be eliminated. To achieve this, we need to build and earn trust from Māori, which is essential for the acceptance of medicines, medicines information and medicine literacy.

Our recent diabetes funding decision has taken an equity approach. Māori and Pacific ethnicities were specifically named within the funding criteria for two medicines for type 2 diabetes (empagliflozin and dulaglutide). This is the first time we have included this wording in Special Authority criteria and was an intentional move to proactively promote equity of access.

Public understanding trust and confidence is another organisational strategic priority. The aim is to positively shift public perception about PHARMAC and the work we do. If New Zealanders understand what we do and how we do it, and feel like we are listening, trust and confidence improves – in PHARMAC, in medicines and medical devices, and in the whole health and disability system.

One of the ways we measure public perception is the annual Colmar Brunton public sector reputation index. PHARMAC has been included in the index for the past five years. In all these years we have had a low score for trust and fairness. Maori are also more likely to be critical of PHARMAC than other ethnicities.

Our current communications approach is mainstream. We focus on all New Zealanders, rather than the different communities within New Zealand, such as Māori. We have a relatively small communications team, an extensive work programme to deliver, and limited internal expertise engaging with different ethnicities and communities.

### **Reached out to several PR agencies for advice**

We reached out to four PR agencies for advice on our communications strategy and how we could further build public understanding trust and confidence.

We had a particular interest in how we could enhance our communications approach for Māori audiences. We selected two agencies who had experience in this area. The agencies we spoke with were selected based on word of mouth and an online search.

The four PR agencies were:

- BRG (Chris Wikaira)
- Draper Cormack Group
- Sputnik
- Whare PR.

The consensus was that our communications strategy was comprehensive and appropriate, however there were opportunities to do targeted campaigns to reach specific communities, such as Māori, on specific and relevant topics, such as diabetes. These campaigns would build trust, as people would see first-hand the value of PHARMAC. They would also provide insights into which communication channels are the most effective for specific communities and provide insights for future work.

### **Whare PR are a unique Māori PR agency**

As the campaign is targeting Māori communities, Whare PR is the best fit. They were created two years ago specifically for clients who want to access a specialised skillset of iwi communications and to tap into their collective networks.

The founder, Bridgette Tapsell, has been in the PR industry assisting Māori organisations and businesses for more than 25 years. They are a Māori-owned company, employing Māori and other cultures too. Currently, Whare PR has six consultants, four of whom are Māori.

Whare PR like pioneer projects and have a reputation for handling complex iwi and media projects smoothly and professionally. The skills, experience, and connections that Whare PR have will allow us to connect with Māori audiences in a genuine way and help build our internal capability for future projects.

### **Aim is to understand how to reach Māori communities**

While we would be promoting the new diabetes medicines, the aim of this campaign is to understand which communication and engagement channels and activities work best for Māori when sharing medicine information. This would be measured by:

- Engagement and sentiment
- Benchmark / comparative to other campaigns/organisations
- Cost per engagement.

A long-term measure will be improvements in public perception for Māori in the annual Colmar Brunton public sector reputation index report. This wouldn't relate to the individual campaign, but the insights and learnings that we can apply to other work.

Trevor Simpson (Chief Advisor Māori), Patsy Kainuku (Senior Maori Programmes Lead) and I would form the project group. Sign off for collateral and messaging will also include the relevant TGM and legal. The TGM will keep the supplier informed about the work.

### **Taking an open approach to the campaign**

It will be a heart campaign – focusing on what this decision means to people. Real people will be the face of the campaign. There are overarching key messages, but the messages used on adverts and campaign material will be based on people's quotes.

The overarching key messages for the campaign are:

- You are a priority
- We aren't just talking about equity, we're doing it
- To make sure there is fairness in the health system, if you are Māori or Pacifica, we're funding two new medicines for those with type 2 diabetes.
- This is a first for Aotearoa.

The channels that will be used during the campaign include:

- Media advertising
- Social media influencers
- Media releases to community papers, pānui and Māori media
- Hosting a Zui series
- Māori Facebook Community Noticeboards
- Videos

As this is an exploratory campaign, we want to take a trial-and-error approach. For example, editing videos in different ways to see which style gets the most engagement, and sharing them on different platforms.

### **Media buy targeted at our key audience**

Our target audience is Māori who have diabetes or are impacted by diabetes and their whānau. We want them to be aware of the new diabetes medicines and to build trust and confidence in PHARMAC.

According to consumption data from the media buying agency, the main ways our target audience consumes media is by radio, Free to Air TV, and online video. For people over 50 years old, community print media is another key channel, and for people aged 30-50 years social media is another key channel.

There are 3 media buy options (\$60k, \$40K and \$25k). I recommend the \$60k package as it across TV, radio, print and digital – and achieves our aim of understanding what approach works best for the target audience.

The \$40K package would be adequate. It excludes print media, but we may reach this channel with the localised PRs. The \$25K package is not suitable as it is very light touch on only two channels.

### **Campaign expected to cost \$135,000**

The full cost of the campaign (with the \$60k media buy) is \$135,000. The breakdown of indicative costs is below. Please note some of these costs are estimated at this stage, such as the influencer.

Whare PR support	\$6,000
Campaign design and assets (Photos, videos, adverts)	\$22,000
Media buy	\$60,000
Influencer	\$20,000
Campaign activities (Media, zui, social media, newsletters)	\$27,000

The campaign will be coded to the Equity budget. While this project is not in the equity strategic priority work programme, the aim of the project supports our equitable access and use work.

Most of the costs would be incurred in the 2020/2021 financial year. There is an underspend in the equity budget for 2020/21. The Director, Engagement and Implementation has agreed to put the underspend towards this project.

The campaign will commence in July 2021. This means the bulk of the costs, such as campaign design and media buy, would be incurred before the end of this financial year.