

## Political Party responses to the PHA – October 2011

Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Chair of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health at the World Health Organization, is a world-leading researcher into health inequities. The review he led for the British Government on improving health and improving fairness in health (Fair Society, Healthy Lives) identified the six most effective strategies to address inequities, based on sound evidence.

The PHA wrote to the major New Zealand political parties asking what they were going to do to apply these strategies here. And, because we are New Zealand, we added an issue crucial to health improvement and fairness here: Māori health.

Responses received from The Greens, Labour, ACT and the Māori Party are summarised below. No responses were received from National, United Future or the Mana Party.

- Green Party responses authorised by Metiria Turei and Russell Norman Parliament Buildings Wellington
- Māori Party responses authorised by Rāhui Kātene, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

### Give every child the best start in life

#### *(a) What is your party going to do to eliminate child poverty, and by when?*

##### GREEN

One quarter of all New Zealand children are growing up in poverty. They are our children, and they deserve better. One of our top priorities this election is to get 100,000 children out of poverty by 2014. We have four solutions to achieve this:

- Make Working for Families work for every low-income family;
- Provide better study support for sole parents and beneficiaries;
- Raise the minimum wage to help working parents;
- Make sure rental properties are warm and healthy for kids.

As PHA members will know, in fact there are more than 200,000 children living in poverty. Our policy focuses on what can realistically be achieved over three years, but of course we would continue until child poverty is eliminated entirely.

Other Green Party policies, such as changes to a more progressive taxation structure (including no Income Tax on the first \$10,000 earned) would help accelerate this process.

##### LABOUR

Reducing the cost of living and increasing wages for families is central to reducing child poverty. Labour will raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour, make the first \$5,000 kiwis earn tax free, and remove GST off fresh fruits and vegetables. This will help ease the pressure on families and help them with their grocery bills giving people the financial ability to raise children.

Children will be the priority for social spending under a Labour-led Government and our plan for tackling child poverty and well-being will be set out in a 6 year Agenda for Change, which will be released shortly.

##### ACT

The most important issue facing New Zealand at the moment is the economy. The Government is borrowing in excess of \$300 million per week and debt is at a record level. Wages aren't growing as

fast as inflation and this means families have less to spend on the essentials, which impacts children. The best way to help children in need is to grow the economy by reducing taxes, stream lining regulation and reducing Government spending. This will mean parents have high wages and greater employment opportunities meaning they will more easily be able to provide for their families.

## MĀORI

Tiakina nga rangatahi, nga rangatira mo apopo. We must care well for our children and young people for they are our leaders of tomorrow.

Metiria Turei and I have announced a Maori Affairs select committee inquiry into the status and wellbeing of Maori children.

The Maori Party seeks to end whanau poverty by 2020 by;

- Introducing a Cross-Government Accord (a 'wellbeing framework') to keep whanau free from all forms of violence; including physical, financial, sexual and racist.
- Establish a \$16 minimum wage;
- Extending the Tax Credit for low-income families;
- Enact an annual power rebate for low-income whānau; installation of low-cost heating and insulating 10,000 low-income homes per year including rental properties.
- Inequality impact statement to be written into all new legislation outlining the likely impact on our children.
- universal well child services to all children under six
- introduce legislation to encourage commercial banks to help meet the needs of borrowers in all segments of their communities (the Community Reinvestment Bill)

*(b) How will your party ensure every parent gets the support they need to give the best nurturing they can?*

## GREEN

Well the package described in above is a good start, but in Green Party policy would be augmented by an extension to paid parental leave, comprehensive Early Childhood Education, substantially increased investment in public health and proactive outreach services from Primary Health Organisations with linkages to other social service agencies.

## LABOUR

Labour believes that parents who stay at home with children in the early years should be supported. The research shows that children's early development is crucial to reducing future obstacles to a healthy life and fulfilling life. Labour will make support available to enable parents to have the time to care, and choices around care with resourcing providing to do it, including for grandparents who undertake care. Labour recognises that caring for young children in families is work and is a valuable contribution and our policies will reflect that stance.

## ACT

See last ACT answer above.

## MĀORI

Whanau Ora is about building and maintaining the capability of whanau to be self-managing. We know that the great majority of our families have an amazing capacity to live healthy lifestyles; to participate fully in society; to nurture one another, and to be resilient no matter what comes their way.

Whanau ora is about ensuring that all families and whanau can be supported to be the best that they can be; to be self-managing and to take responsibility for their own economic, social and cultural development.

At the heart of the approach is the support to build whanau capability, to strengthen whanau connections, to support the development of whanau leadership and to enhance best outcomes for them.

## Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

*(a) What does your party intend to do to make sure everyone – including children and teens – has the opportunity to learn, achieve and improve their skills (which will see them realise improved employment, income and positive health behaviours)?*

### GREEN

As PHA members might expect, the Green Party start with upstream factors. Thus we believe our commitment to creating a more equal society will have the largest effect. We also know that living in cold damp overcrowded houses is having serious impacts on the health of our children. We want to extend the funding of the Warm Healthy Homes Project - a Green Party initiative taken up first by Labour and then by National - to ensure more children are able to grow up in a warm healthy home. Additionally we support increasing the number of state houses to alleviate overcrowding. The Green Party supports all the recommendations on child health from the Public Health Advisory Committee.

The Green Party also has comprehensive education policies. Fundamentally these differ from current policy settings in two respects: our approach to education is to adopt approaches tailored to the individual needs of learners, instead of the increasing standardisation currently in place, and we also prioritise education (and health) for increased funding, ahead of more motorways or tax cuts for those who are already the best off least need them.

### LABOUR

Labour will restore investment in quality early childhood education to give children the best start to their primary education. Labour will lift achievement by setting high expectations for each student according to their individual ability and providing parents with information they want about their primary education.

Labour's youth skills and employment package will give all teenagers the opportunity to be earning or learning within three years. The package creates 9,000 more apprenticeships by providing employers with an \$8,700 subsidy to take on and train young people. It also includes 5,000 new fees-free training places for 16 and 17 at polytechnics and other training providers.

### ACT

ACT supports two key policies which will help young people reach their potential. The first is school choice. Sadly 20 per cent of young people leave school without any form of qualifications. While there are many great public schools in New Zealand, there are also far too many that are failing our children and that parents have no choice but to use. ACT is the only party which supports funding following the child, which means parents can choose the school that best suits their child's needs.

The second key policy is reintroducing the youth minimum wage, which was abolished in 2008. Youth unemployment is at record 27.5 per cent, which means more than a quarter of our young people are starting their adult lives unemployed. This is because a lack of youth rates is forcing 16 and 17 year olds to compete with much older and experienced workers for jobs. ACT would

reintroduce youth rates so employers take on more young people, giving them that much needed leg up into the job market.

## MĀORI

To guarantee a bright and secure future for Māori, the Māori Party has our children and young people at the heart of its policy. We aim to achieve this by taking an approach to education which is values and virtues-based. We want to increase the number of community literacy programmes and we will be implementing vocational programmes in schools so that students can go to workplaces and experience possible career options so that future study is more focused and meaningful.

One of the most significant ways in which we hope to support children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities is through cultural competency.

Cultural competency is about understanding how our values impact on practice, it assists effective communication, and it is about enhancing relationships to ensure the best possible outcomes. Our intention is that all agencies will be monitored for cultural competency to ensure the quality of services, access and outcomes are achieved to bring out well-being.

Chief executives will be required to report six monthly on how they are progressing positive outcomes for whānau and cultural competence will be an employment standard in justice, health, education, and social services. We would like to see an opportunity within the State Services Commission's Performance Improvement Framework for government agencies to be asked to account for their responsiveness to whanau and whanau ora.

Cultural competency has been a long established standard in the health profession – in its essence; it encompasses the need for health workers to be conscious of their own cultural locatedness as a pre-requisite to relating to other cultures (NB: Section 118 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 requires the Board to set standards of clinical competence, cultural competence and ethical conduct).

The Māori Party have recently broadened the approach by implementing 'Tataiako', a cultural competency framework within the education sector. In this initiative, the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand Teachers Council and the Education Review Office, have collaborated to demonstrate the importance of the teaching workforce being culturally competent".

*(b) How does your party intend to address the problems New Zealand society faces from addiction (mainly alcohol and tobacco) that rob individuals of their personal choice and control over their own lives?*

## GREEN

The Green Party supports taking a rational approach to drugs based around harm minimisation, believing a drug-free lifestyle to be optimal. We support taking a multifaceted approach. We support progressively phasing out broadcast, billboard and print including point of display alcohol and alcohol brand advertising. In addition we would like to see:

- display of accurate health information on alcohol products;
- require supermarkets selling alcohol to do so from a separate space;
- set a minimum price for alcohol to a prevent sale of alcohol as a loss leader;
- replace the current alcohol tax regime with a volumetric tax for all drinks containing alcohol and progressively increase this tax to cover a greater proportion of costs incurred by government and society by alcohol abuse;
- strengthening enforcement of the current law around illegal sale and supply of alcohol to minors;

The Green Party has been strongly supportive of initiatives to reduce tobacco-related harm. We have been behind increases to taxation on tobacco products and the outlawing of retail display of tobacco products. We pushed unsuccessfully for the other recommendations of the Maori Affairs Select Committee inquiry also to be implemented at the same time, but will now pursue this in a future Parliament.

The Green Party is particularly keen to see implemented the recommendations of the National Health Committee on health services for prisoners. Alcohol and drug treatment services should be available to all prisoners who need them.

## LABOUR

Labour will prioritise work on public health, particularly in addressing health issues caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. We believe there needs to be a stronger focus on treatment around harm minimisation, prevention and early intervention. We will also seek greater opportunities to get people into treatment rather than simply hauling them through the justice system and will continue to work on smoking cessation.

We will investigate those recommendations contained in the Law Commission report *“Alcohol: Curbing the Harm”* that have not been included in the Government’s legislation. These include minimum pricing for alcohol, restricting alcohol advertising and lowering the drink-driving tolerance.

Labour will give serious consideration to the Law Commission’s review of the Misuse of Drugs Act, *“Controlling and Regulating Drugs”* and where appropriate, we will seek to implement the recommendations of that report.

## ACT

When it comes to alcohol and tobacco ACT believes education is key. Young people need to be taught about the harms of drugs and alcohol so they make sensible choices.

## MĀORI

In April 2010 the Maori Party introduced legislation to increase the tobacco excise. The excise tax increases were really significant. First off, we equalised the tax on loose tobacco to match tailor-made cigarettes. Basically this was about ensuring no matter what type of tobacco smoked, the smoker would face the same incentive to quit. Then we raised the tax on all tobacco products by ten percent. For roll-your-own-tobacco that had an effect of an immediate increase by more than 25%. The legislation passed that night included another ten percent rise in January 2011 and then another ten percent in 2012. The number of smokers registered with Quitline almost doubled in the month after the increases came into effect.

Earlier this year we passed the Smokefree Environments (Controls and Enforcement) Bill which removed all tobacco displays in supermarkets and dairies. We aim to continue this momentum in the next term by passing legislation which will make tobacco companies sell all of their tobacco products in plain packaging.

While we wholeheartedly see the need for significant investment in the sector targeted at alcohol treatment services we are strongly in support of any initiatives that lessen accessibility to alcohol, whether by limiting trading hours, limiting the number of alcohol outlets, or limiting the types of alcohol products available.

We also maintain that alcohol taxation; minimum pricing and advertising restrictions are the most powerful tools in addressing the harms of alcohol use.

We support the intention to keep these priority areas open, such as monitoring overseas developments on minimum pricing; and working with the industry to investigate minimum pricing.

We also support the proposal for a cross agency advertising and sponsorship review, as recommended by the Law Commission.

## Create fair employment and good work for all

### *(a) What will your party do to create safe workplaces?*

#### GREEN

The Green Party is committed to reducing the number of fatalities and accidents in the workplace. We have been working hard on this issue in Parliament in the wake of the Pike River disaster. We have been successful in pushing the Government to establish a High Hazards Unit to regulate workplace safety in mining and oil exploration, but greater scrutiny is also required in other high risk industries like forestry, and most fundamentally the Health and Safety in Employment Act, and subsidiary regulations, all need overhaul to ensure best practice is mandatorily implemented, instead of the “where practicable” standard currently in place. If safety is not practicable then nobody should be working in that workplace. An increasing number of employees are also becoming ill because they are required to work in dangerous and toxic environments or are subjected to excessive workplace stress or poor ergonomics.

The Green Party will:

- Support and develop initiatives that will enable workplace participation systems to work effectively, including those that increase resources for union involvement and participation in health and safety training;
- Support the development of health and safety obligations and responsibilities for the owner of a workplace who contracts, or sub-contracts, work to be performed at that workplace;
- Support the development of regulations and codes of practice to strengthen the legislation in key areas such as workplace-related stress, the control of substances hazardous to health amongst others.

#### LABOUR

Labour will reinstate check inspectors within most mines around the country to help ensure that working conditions are safe for miners.

We lost 29 precious lives in the Pike River disaster. We must do everything we can to avoid a similar tragedy happening again.

Our remaining health and safety policy will be announced closer to the election.

#### ACT

New Zealand has a reasonably flexible labour market that serves us well, but we can do better. ACT supported the Government’s move to open up the ACC workplace account to competition, a move that will encourage safer work places as the safest companies will get the best deals from insurers. ACT’s policies of reducing taxes and regulation will encourage businesses to invest and employ more people, which will reduce unemployment and lift wages.

#### MĀORI

The Māori Party wants to ensure that workplaces are safe and fair environments in which to work, where employees are made to feel valued and respected. Cultural competency forms part of that context.

Our full policy manifesto will be launched on 29 October. Until that time we are unable to disclose the details of our employment proposals.

*(b) What will your party do to create permanent, full-time employment?*

**GREEN**

One of our key priorities this election is to create new, green collar, jobs. Our plan will create 100,000 new jobs through direct government investment in housing, by ensuring our state-owned energy companies capture the massive export opportunities in the renewable energy sector, and, most importantly, by shifting the drivers for green jobs in the private sector. As with all of our answers to the PHA questions, much more detail is available on the Green Party website [www.greens.org.nz/greenjobs](http://www.greens.org.nz/greenjobs).

**LABOUR**

Labour is rolling out a fully-costed economic policy that will put in place the right elements to encourage growth and job creation.

We've announced new rules to protect our land and vital assets, ensuring those who buy into New Zealand are helping to grow our economy. We'll boost research & development with a 12.5% tax credit, encouraging businesses to innovate and create highly skilled jobs. We'll ensure that government supply contracts work for New Zealand companies and provide opportunities for New Zealand workers.

Labour's youth employment and skills policy gives all teenagers the opportunity to be earning or learning within three years. This includes investing \$87 million to get 9000 young New Zealanders off the dole and into apprenticeships by offering employers an \$8700 subsidy per person over one year, and 5,000 new fees-free training places.

**ACT**

See last ACT answer above

**MĀORI**

See last Māori Party answer above.

*(c) What will your party do to create decent work that pays a living wage?*

**GREEN**

The Green Party supports increasing the minimum wage as well as investing in education to upskill our workforce and increase our productivity. This is obviously potentially a huge topic in itself, but the critical task is to transform the New Zealand economy away from its absolute dependence on exporting raw primary products large distances and competing on price. This kind of economy typically delivers poor quality jobs and low wages, and is also very fragile and doomed to ultimate failure. We need instead to base our economy on exporting high quality products, with high knowledge content, to niche markets, alongside our domestic self-sufficient economy. This transformation delivers better jobs and better wages.

**LABOUR**

Working families and other middle income kiwis are finding it harder by the week to get by because the cost of living is rising and incomes aren't keeping pace, over the last 3 years, median household income rose 2.5% while consumer prices rose 9%.

Labour will be announcing a new work and wages policy to help ensure Kiwi workers receive fair wages for a fair days work.

Labour will increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in our first year in office. Increasing the minimum wage puts extra money in the pockets of Kiwi workers who are currently struggling with the cost of living.

#### ACT

See last ACT answer above.

#### MĀORI

See last Māori Party answer above.

### Ensure healthy standard of living for all”

*(a) How does your party intend to improve the situation of the 20 percent of New Zealanders who can't afford sufficient nutritious basic food?*

#### GREEN

Primarily our approach to addressing food affordability has been to work on reducing poverty, so that everyone has enough money to afford such food. Our solutions include increasing the minimum wage, raising the level of benefits to a liveable level and investing in creating jobs to reduce unemployment. We have also supported targeted taxes on unhealthy foods to shift the price signals, and have advocated for greater regulation of the supermarket duopoly (which has seen poor returns to growers simultaneous with high prices for consumers). We are also strong advocates for enabling people to grow their own food, or buy from local growers.

#### LABOUR

Labour believes we need to invest in measures that keep New Zealanders healthy, and avoid the need for expensive interventions further down the track. Being healthy does not start in a doctor's office or in a hospital. It starts with keeping people healthy in our communities.

With prices rising at their fastest rate in 21 years and with wages failing to keep up it is becoming increasingly hard to afford the basics. This is one of the reasons that Labour is taking GST off fresh fruit and veges. This will reduce the prices of these foods by 15 per cent which will help take pressure off the family food bill.

We will make it easier for families to make ends meet through increasing the minimum wage of \$15 per hour and making the first \$5000 earned tax free.

#### ACT

ACT would reduce taxes so families keep more of their own money so they can spend more on essentials such as food. Reducing Government spending and debt will also allow businesses to grow, which will lead to wage growth. Growing the economy is the best way to ensure everyone has enough money for the basics.

#### MĀORI

A key priority that I have advanced through this term of Parliament has been to take GST off food with a private members bill going through the House but negated at its first reading. My Goods and Services Tax (Exemption of Healthy Food) Amendment Bill was to address rising food prices by removing goods and services tax from healthy food as defined by the Ministry of Health. This will continue to be a key priority in the next term.

The Maori Party will also expand Mara Kai and provide support for gardens for co-op communities, schools, marae and whanau collectives right across Aotearoa. With commentators talking of second recession, the Maori Party wants to ensure that every whanau has access to kai. Food security

should be the basis of any economic policy that allows communities to be nourished, healthy, resilient and self-sustainable. Mara Kai also lessen the impacts of natural disasters that wipe out crops, and of the current unstable global economy.

Our full policy manifesto will be launched on 29 October. Until that time we are unable to disclose the details of our housing proposals.

*(b) What will your party do about the worsening housing shortage, particularly in Auckland, which is forcing thousands to live in substandard conditions?*

#### GREEN

The Green Party supports building and acquiring more State Housing (costed details on our website). In addition continuing and increasing the insulation fund will mean more housing will be warmer and dryer. We also support a capital gains tax which will make it more affordable for first home buyers.

#### LABOUR

New Zealand is currently facing a national housing crisis with an expected shortage of 25,000 dwellings over the next decade. Part of the reason that we face the current challenges in housing is because New Zealand has not planned well for future housing needs. Home ownership has been declining in New Zealand with increasing numbers of households forced to rent as the housing market became increasingly unaffordable.

We will be releasing further policy during the election campaign to help address these issues.

#### ACT

ACT is also very concerned about the cost of housing, particularly in Auckland. One of the key reasons prices are so high is the Resource Management Act and other local regulations is holding back new housing developments. ACT will seek in the next term to pass our Regulatory Standards Bill which will improve regulation, making it easier for new houses to be built.

#### MĀORI

See last Māori Party answer above.

### **Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities”**

*(a) What is your party going to do to ensure that health, and fairness in health, is a key part of local and regional government governance and planning – for example in the reconstruction of Christchurch?*

#### GREEN

The Green Party’s holistic approach to health, addressing the causes as well as the symptoms, means that local government plays a key role in our vision for a healthy Aotearoa. Of course the Local Government Act already provides for this, with its “wellbeing” objectives, but few Councils have thoroughly embraced this intent. Transport planning and urban design play are important in dictating how active people are on a daily basis and we support a rebalancing away from the car dominated cityscapes to a friendlier urban environment. The Green Party led a series of public meetings in Christchurch with experts in sustainable urban design and has produced a comprehensive report on how we believe we could rebuild a “liveable” city.

#### LABOUR

Local and regional governance has an important role to play in ensuring the health of New Zealanders. Labour believes that the health impacts of all local governance and planning needs to be considered before decisions are made. By ensuring that we have clean air, clean water and open

spaces we can safeguard a vibrant and healthy future for all New Zealanders. We will also ensure local and regional government has good relationships with local DHBs to ensure future planning encompasses the public health needs of the local communities

#### ACT

ACT believes that health care must be accessible, affordable and available for all New Zealanders. While the National Government has made some small changes to improve health provision it must do a lot more. ACT supports greater use of the private sector, which has demonstrated it is often far more efficient than the public sector, to ensure that all patients get the treatment they need in a timely manner.

#### MĀORI

We promote the principles of protection, partnership and consultation under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and would like to see these principles incorporated into all future legislation. In particular, we will look to enact many of the recommendations in the Waitangi Tribunal's Wai 262 Flora and Fauna report, where equal representation and decision-making rights for iwi are necessary to protect the environment and our unique culture. We will look to restore water quality by finding new and innovative ways to clean up and reduce pollution based on these principles. And we will subsidise businesses who undertake environmental audits and find ways to reduce their carbon footprint.

Other details will be available when our full policy manifesto is launched on 29 October.

#### *(b) How is your party going to ensure environmental sustainability for future generations?*

#### GREEN

The Green Party is committed to looking after and protecting our environment. This is a principle which we measure all of our policy against. As an independent party we have a track record of working with both National and Labour to obtain policy wins and shift NZ away from its current exploitative economic path and move towards a more sustainable future. For a start we need to transition away from our current addiction to fossil fuels, offshore drilling – whatever the risk of spills – will not achieve this nor will opening new coal mines. We need to invest more in clean technology and structure the rules to incentivise private funding into R&D especially greentech. We have to address the impact of industrialised dairy farming especially in areas where the environment cannot support it. The reality is that this will take more than one three year term of government, but we are committed to engaging with successive governments to improve and find better solutions.

#### LABOUR

Labour believes government must set the standard and take a leadership role on sustainability.

We need well-considered and robust policy initiatives, developed in consultation and partnership with all those who have a stake in the '100 percent pure' branding that gives us an edge in international markets.

#### ACT

See last ACT answer above.

#### MĀORI

See last Māori Party answer above.

## Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention”

*What is your party going to do to implement the recent advice of the World Bank that it is an inefficient use of resources to wait until individuals develop chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes), and that instead countries should use cost-efficient prevention measures?*

### GREEN

The Green Party has a deep understanding of the socio-environmental model of health, which underpins both health protection and health promotion. In consequence our approach to health has a very strong emphasis on addressing upstream factors, such as the Social Determinants of Health identified by the World Health Organisation. The World Bank assessment is welcome because it says that the approaches we have known all along to be the best for improving population health, also make the most economic sense. Locally Gareth Morgan’s analysis has supported this conclusion. Green Party policy is to progressively increase the share of health funding for public health initiatives to 10% (to be used for funding well-founded, evidence-based programmes). Unfortunately current Government spending priorities are in the opposite direction, with health funding overall being eroded in real terms, and within health funding increases to elective surgery and more specialised services are being funded by big reductions in public health funding and some reductions in primary care. “Improve Maori health”

### LABOUR

As our population ages and the cost of providing secondary and tertiary services continues to rise, the challenge of creating a sustainable health system grows larger. To meet this challenge we must invest in primary care, public health and the wellbeing of children. We need to address the inequalities in income, housing, education and other determinants of good health. With a preventative approach that puts people in control of their own health we can create a sustainable health system – without it we will face huge cost blowouts in years to come.

Under the current government public health funding has been reduced, with \$124 million cut in the 2011 Budget. This includes significant cuts in spending on public health measures aimed at fighting obesity, such as the Healthy Eating Healthy Action Strategy. These actions are damaging moves to improve our country's obesity rates. Labour will make investment in public health and prevention programmes a priority.

### ACT

ACT agrees that preventative health is crucial. It is really important that individuals take greater responsibility for their own health and lifestyle choices. It is also important that subsidies for primary and preventative health are targeted at those on low incomes who really need it, not given universally which is a significant waste of resources.

ACT believes that public health measures such as vaccination, pandemic planning and education campaigns are crucial to preventing and managing disease and should be appropriately funded by Government.

### MĀORI

We believe wholeheartedly in developing an approach to healthcare in New Zealand which focuses on prevention measures. This approach has been evident in the work that Tariana Turia has advanced in diabetes prevention and management (\$8m for bariatric surgery); tobacco control and rheumatic fever in which \$12m has been allocated for throat swabbing services; Improved awareness of rheumatic fever across the community; network development and service coordination; surveillance, monitoring and evaluation.

## How will your party improve the health of Maori, and in particular ensure that:

### *(a) Māori are not living in circumstances that make them vulnerable to poor health?*

#### GREEN

The Green Party looks at health holistically, and acknowledges that poverty is one of the root causes of ill health, so we are very focused on addressing the social deprivation which is so often associated with poor health outcomes. Maori are overrepresented in our poverty statistics, more likely than non-Maori to live in overcrowded, cold, damp housing and more likely to suffer diseases associated with poor diet. To turn this around we need to lift incomes, improve housing and diet, and that is exactly what the Green Party is committed to doing.

It is important that we recognise the importance of local economic development by, with and for tangata whenua. In addition initiatives like raising the minimum wage, extending the insulation scheme and building/acquiring more state houses as well as ensuring access to tertiary education will make a start on addressing the disparity between Maori and Pākehā health easily identified by the difference in average life expectancies.

We have as a strong priority lifting 100,000 children out of poverty by 2014. While this is a general non-targeted measure it will have good outcomes for Maori.

After controlling for socio-economic status, Maori ethnicity remains an independent risk factor for morbidity and mortality. Or put another way, it's not all about poverty; it's also about discrimination in how health services are provided. The Green Party has a proud record of standing up against racism and has a commitment in our founding Charter to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Maori text of course).

#### LABOUR

A range of studies in New Zealand have shown that Māori deaths from treatable illness are far higher than non-Māori. There are many social determinants such as inequality, low home ownership rates, overcrowding and unemployment which have led to poor health for Maori people. This has led to higher rates of diseases such as rheumatic fever where rates for Maori are 20 times more likely than New Zealand European and others. These rates are unacceptable and will not be reduced unless we urgently look at how we address social factors that influence health inequity, such as overcrowded housing and inadequate nutrition. Labour will be releasing further policy during the election which will help to address these issues.

#### ACT

ACT believes that the kind of health reform that will make everyone healthier will also make Maori communities healthier too. One of the reasons Maori have poorer health outcomes than the rest of the community is that they tend to have lower wages, and ACT's policies to grow the economy which help lift many Maori out of poverty.

#### MĀORI

What we know from all available evidence is that in the health sector Maori receive

- fewer referrals,
- fewer diagnostic tests and
- less effective treatment plans from their doctors than do non-Maori patients,
- they are offered treatments at substantially decreased rates,
- interviewed for less time, and
- prescribed fewer secondary services such as physiotherapy, chiropractors and rehabilitation.

- Whether it is in referral to tertiary cardiac surgery, in general surgical procedures, and in prescription rates, Maori encounter a different health system in the quality of health care they receive.

We support the thinking outlined in the Waitangi Tribunals report to WAI 262 regarding the expectations of the Treaty partnership that the Crown must put in place laws and policies to support and promote health, (Article three) while also, to the greatest extent practicable, protecting the authority of iwi and hapu in relation to their taonga, including the practice of rongoa and the knowledge and concepts on which it is based. (article two)

*(b) All Māori can afford and get to health care?*

GREEN

To further improve Maori health outcomes we need to provide Maori specific services and assist Maori to manage their own health needs. It is about increasing accessibility of health services through community and marae-based services. We also support additional funding for health research resources to be directed at Maori health issues in order to address the continuing disparities.

Some of those people with the greatest needs still do not access primary care services that could assist them, even if such services are free of charge. Clearly what is required is a more proactive approach from health services. One model would be for Maori Primary Health Organisations to have access to funding specifically to enable them to approach whanau with high needs, ideally also acting as agents for other agencies such as Housing NZ and WINZ, providing a single point of contact to wraparound services.

Additionally we want to work with Maori to facilitate and support the development of research partnerships between Maori and non-Maori researchers to meet the urgent need for research that benefits Maori health. We also believe that it is important to ensure Maori representation and consultation at all levels of the health service.

LABOUR

Prevention of problems such as health problems is essential to improving the health and wellbeing of whanau across the country. By continuing to provide affordable healthcare for all New Zealanders, Labour will ensure that diseases disproportionately affecting Māori are detected as early as possible.

ACT

See last ACT answer above.

MĀORI

See last Māori Party answer above.

*(c) Māori receive the same good quality treatment as other New Zealanders?*

GREEN

An audit of services against the dimensions of health quality (accessibility, acceptability, effectiveness, efficiency and safety) suggests that quality improvement is generally required to service accessibility and acceptability. Maori-provided services are part of the answer, but a minimum standard must surely be that every service meets basic standards of cultural safety, with implications for professional training and quality monitoring. The evidence is clear that services generally do a poorer job of responding to Maori health need than the same level of need in non-Maori, and that must be one of the top drivers of Government Health policy. Reducing health inequalities is no longer one of the Minister's priorities for DHBs.

## LABOUR

Labour is committed to ensuring all New Zealanders have the opportunity to live a healthy life. We will continue to focus on ensuring universal, equitable access to health services while continuing to provide special attention and resources for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Labour will ensure that Māori Health providers continue to deliver health services to Māori and supports the Māori Health Strategy “He Korowai Oranga”.

## ACT

See last ACT answer above.

## MĀORI

See last Māori Party answer above.