



MEDIA RELEASE

With reference to the National Bowel Screening programme Te ORA says:

1. We have considered the epidemiology as reported by researchers Ass-Prof Sue Crengle and Melissa Cragg and have been advocating for over a year for the lowering of the lower age range for Māori to from 60 to 50 on the basis that the programme presently exacerbates inequity.
2. Listed below are All expert parties who are in support of lowering the age range for Māori; including:
 - Hei Ahuru Mowai,
 - Cancer Control Agency Advisory Board,
 - Bowel Cancer NZ,
 - National Screening Advisory Committee,
 - RNZCGPs,
 - National BCS Network,
 - the National BC Working Group,
 - Te Tumu Whakarae and various DHBs
3. The Ministry's National Screening Unit itself have previously stated that a staged rollout is the appropriate approach (April 2019, MoH website).
4. The Ministry of Health and the Cancer Control Agency Executive team are the only ones not to support change. They state struggling colposcopy services. We reject that – there are services in private medicine that have not been utilised. We think they must therefore simply be unwilling to endorse a programme of spending that has different ages ranges for different ethnicities.

Summary: A Ministry of Health that has a screening programme that produces systematic inequity is clearly mired in institutional racism and the new Health Minister is either busy (with COVID-19) or overworked (with multiple Ministry commitments) because if he saw decent advice he would act quickly to support the obvious pathway forward.

Professor David Tipene-Leach

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