

Hon Andrew Little

Minister of Health
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations
Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry
Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques



03 MAY 2022

Paul Jackson

alopecianzweb@gmail.com

Tēnā koe Paul,

Government response to the Petitions Committee report - Petition 2020/24 of Paul Jackson on behalf of Alopecia New Zealand: Improve the wigs and hairpieces subsidy, accepted products and claim terms

I am writing to acknowledge the concerns you raised in your petition on behalf of Alopecia New Zealand to *"improve the wigs and hairpieces subsidy, accepted products and claim terms"*.

Thank you for raising concerns about the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments. The government is committed to ensuring all New Zealanders, including those suffering from permanent or temporary hair loss, have access to adequate care and support. I acknowledge that stigma associated with hair loss can impact the lives of people with alopecia and recognise the many community voices that contributed to the petition process.

The Ministry of Health has begun work to review the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments Notice. I expect the Ministry to engage with you and Alopecia New Zealand in undertaking this review.

I enclose for your information, the Government's response to the Petition Committee's recommendations, which has been presented to Parliament. It outlines the actions the government is taking to review the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments, including options to better align payments between the Ministries of Health and Social Development.

Nāku noa, nā

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Health

**Government Response to
Report of Petitions Committee**

on

**Petition 2020/24 of Paul Jackson on behalf of Alopecia NZ: Improve
the wigs and hairpieces subsidy, accepted products and claim
terms**

Presented to the House of Representatives

In accordance with Standing Order 252

Government response to Report of Petitions Committee on Petition 2020/24 of Paul Jackson on behalf of Alopecia NZ: Improve the wigs and hairpieces subsidy, accepted products and claim terms

Introduction

- 1 The government has carefully considered the Petition Committee's report on the Petition: "Improve the wigs and hairpieces subsidy, accepted products and claim terms". The petition requests that the New Zealand government:
 - 1.1 increase the amounts that people can claim under the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments
 - 1.2 reduce the claim periods for adults and children
 - 1.3 include microblading and other eyebrow tattooing in the payment
 - 1.4 do further policy work to ensure that the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments better meet the needs of those with temporary alopecia.
- 2 The Petition Committee also recommended that:
 - 2.1 the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development to work together to explore ways of streamlining the payments in this area.
- 3 The government welcomes the Committee's report, and we thank the petitioner for bringing this matter to the government's attention.
- 4 The government responds to the referral of this petition in accordance with Standing Order 252.
- 5 The government has considered the petition as it relates to the government's ongoing commitment to support people who suffer permanent or temporary hair loss due to a medical condition.

Recommendations and government response

- 6 Recommendation 1: increase the amounts that people can claim under the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments.
- 7 Response: The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) will review the level of funding available for people with permanent hair loss under the subsidy.
- 8 Recommendation 2: reduce the claim periods for adults and children.
- 9 Response: The Ministry will review the level of service provision for eligible children.

- 10 Recommendation 3: include microblading and other eyebrow tattooing in the payment.
- 11 Response: the Ministry supports new types of services, including tattoos and microblading, where these services are supported as being appropriate by the person's specialist or general practitioner (GP). These requests have been considered by the Ministry on a case-by-case basis. The Ministry has updated consumer information to reflect this.
- 12 Recommendation 4: do further policy work to ensure that the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments better meet the needs of those with temporary alopecia.
- 13 Response: The Ministry will retain the provision for temporary hair loss as set out in the Notice. People with temporary hair loss due to cancer therapies and people who are diagnosed with temporary hair loss due to alopecia will continue to have the option of accessing the temporary hair loss entitlement.
- 14 Recommendation 5: encourage the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development to work together to explore ways of streamlining the payments in this area.
- 15 Response: The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development will consider options to better align payment systems as a part of the review.

Conclusion

- 16 The government is committed to ensuring all New Zealanders, including those suffering from permanent or temporary hair loss, have access to adequate care and support.
- 17 The government thanks Paul Jackson and Alopecia NZ for raising concerns about the Wig and Hairpiece Service Payments and will review key elements of the policy.