

4 December 2023

Hon Dr Shane Reti  
Minister of Health  
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Parliament Buildings  
**Wellington 6160**

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Dear Minister Reti

I am writing to bring your attention to the regional inequity of trauma services throughout New Zealand. Currently, there are significant differences in the availability and quality of trauma care in different regions. The four major trauma centers in Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, and Christchurch showcase these disparities.

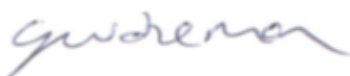
Auckland and Waikato currently have inpatient admitting services and adequate staffing levels with nurses, fellows, and administration. Waikato Hospital has even passed level 1 verification by the College of Surgeons. However, Wellington lacks trauma surgeons and does not have an inpatient service for trauma patients. Christchurch, on the other hand, has an inpatient service but lacks sufficient trauma surgeons, a dedicated House Surgeon for inpatients, trauma nurses, and administration.

Recently, at the national trauma symposium, the results of a paediatric mortality study comparing New Zealand with Victoria, Australia were presented. Shockingly, our mortality rate was double that of Victoria. This suggests that if we were to examine trauma key performance indicators more closely, we would find that New Zealand lags behind Australia.

The College of Surgeons has called for a review of the inequities between regions and for hospitals to be given the resources to appoint more staff. It is crucial that we establish a first-class trauma service in New Zealand, with the four major trauma hubs leading the way. Once we have achieved this, we can then focus on improving trauma care in regional centers throughout the country.

I urge you to address this issue and take the necessary steps to ensure that all New Zealanders have access to high-quality trauma care, regardless of their location. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely



Dr Chris Wakeman, FRACS  
**Chair, AoNZ Trauma Committee**

cc: Fionnagh Dougan, National Director, Hospital & Specialist Services - Te Whatu Ora

Margie Apa - Chief Executive, Te Whatu Ora

Megan Main, Chief Executive, ACC



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