

New Zealand **Doctor** Rata Aotearoa

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The influencers: A who's who of primary care atop the new health system

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Primary care has long been hoping to see champions go into the ring on its behalf [Image: Attentie Attentie on Unsplash]

I will continue to champion primary care on the board of Te Whatu Ora, reminding people to talk to us, listen to us, support us and invest in us

The national agency overarching the new health system has said little about what the reforms will bring for primary care – but has disclosed who among its leadership represent primary care or have a primary care background.

Te Whatu Ora provided a list of those people but added, in a statement to *New Zealand Doctor Rata Aotearoa*, there are “a number of other leaders across the organisation who have primary care expertise but work in teams such as mental health, population health, etc”.

It is worth keeping in mind the organisation – formed last July with the dissolution of the DHBs – is undergoing a massive restructure, with the **potential to impact up to 1600 jobs**. It has yet to announce any changes in relation to the restructure.

The list of people below is accurate as of the beginning of May.

Jeff Lowe, Te Whatu Ora board member



Te Whatu Ora board member and Wellington-based specialist GP Jeff Lowe

Wellington-based specialist GP Jeff Lowe sits on the board of Te Whatu Ora. Announcing Dr Lowe's appointment last November, then health minister Andrew Little said his presence on the board [would strengthen its clinical awareness](#) and "add a primary care voice, which is important as Te Whatu Ora seeks to achieve a better alignment between the work of GPs and hospitals".

Dr Lowe stepped down as chair of General Practice New Zealand in early 2023, after seven years. He worked on Te Whatu Ora's Planned Care Taskforce and COVID-19 Health System Preparedness group.

The Otago University medical graduate (1984) is a partner in Karori Medical Centre, with an interest in travel and paediatric medicine. He is also a general practice trainer.

In his [final column as chair of GPNZ](#), Dr Lowe wrote: "I will continue to champion primary care on the board of Te Whatu Ora, reminding people to talk to us, listen to us, support us and invest in us."

Abbe Anderson, national director, commissioning



Abbe Anderson is national director, commissioning for Te Whatu Ora

Originally from Colorado, US, Abbe Anderson joined [Te Whatu Ora as national director, commissioning in September](#) last year, moving from Brisbane where she worked for the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service and the Brisbane North Primary Health Network.

Ms Anderson led the Brisbane North network through two significant government reforms to transition from a Division of General Practice to Medicare Local and then to its present form as an organisation commissioning primary care services for a population of more than a million.

She is a director on the board of Australian mental health charity Beyond Blue. She was described as “passionate about equity” by Te Whatu Ora chief executive Fepulea’i Margie Apa when her appointment was announced.

Ms Anderson’s role is to lead the strategic development and management of a commissioning system, delivering community and primary care and integrating with hospital and specialist services. She also works closely with Te Aka Whai Ora.

Ms Anderson has a Master of Business Administration from the University of Otago and a PhD in public health and community medicine from the University of New South Wales.

Allan Moffitt, interim clinical director, primary and community care, commissioning



Specialist GP Allan Moffitt is ProCare's clinical director and an interim clinical director for Te Whatu Ora

South Auckland specialist GP Allan Moffitt wears many hats. He has been on secondment to Te Whatu Ora as interim clinical director, primary and community care since September, while also working part time as clinical director for ProCare, which he joined in 2014, and one day per week as a GP at The Fono in Manurewa. Before being seconded to Te Whatu Ora, Dr Moffitt was seconded to the Ministry of Health for seven months.

He graduated from the University of Auckland in 1984, and previously owned his own practice in Howick for 18 years. Dr Moffitt was awarded a distinguished service medal from the RNZCGP. He sits on the independent advisory group for Precision Driven Health, is a director of ProCare-owned primary mental health provider Fresh Minds, and is a member of the Institute of Directors.

Emma Prestidge, interim director, primary, community and rural, commissioning



Emma Prestidge is a former nurse

Formerly a registered nurse, Emma Prestidge was appointed interim director, primary, community and rural, commissioning, in July 2022. Prior to that, Ms Prestidge worked at the Ministry of Health, which she joined in 2010 and where she held a number of senior positions.

Ms Prestidge qualified as a registered nurse at Whitireia Community Polytechnic in Porirua in 1988, and has a clinical Master of Health (Nursing) from Victoria University of Wellington. She has worked in clinical practice for over 20 years, mainly in primary and community care in New Zealand and England.

Adeline Cumings, group manager, primary health care system improvement and innovation, commissioning



Adeline Cumings moved to Te Whatu Ora from the Ministry of Health [Image: Supplied]

Adeline Cumings transferred to Te Whatu Ora in July as group manager, primary health care system improvement and innovation, commissioning, from the Ministry of Health, where she held the same position. She worked at the ministry for almost four years.

Her previous experience covers the Medical Council, the former Counties Manukau DHB, and co-founding YouMe NZ, a wellness platform encouraging young people to live healthier lives.

She has a social sciences degree from Victoria University of Wellington, and a postgraduate diploma in public health management, executive management from the University of Waikato.

Michael Howard, Acting Manager, Primary Care



Acting manager of primary care, Michael Howard [Image: Supplied]

Michael Howard joined Te Whatu Ora last October as principal advisor, national contracts, a role that supports contracts across primary care, pharmacy and rural health. He switched to acting manager, primary care in February.

Mr Howard has over 20 years' experience in the business and management side of health. His experience includes roles at Compass Health, the Ministry of Health, General Practice NZ, TAS (now part of Te Whatu Ora) and Patients First. Primary care, contracts and project management have been his focus