



New Zealand House of Representatives
Te Whare Māngai o Aotearoa

Petitions Committee

Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Petihana

54th Parliament

August 2026

Briefing on Government responses to committee recommendations

Interim report 2

Presented to the House of Representatives
by Greg O'Connor, Chairperson

Contents

Recommendation.....	3
About committee recommendations in petition reports.....	3
Petition of Kevin Scott—Require holders of on-licences to provide zero-alcohol wines, beers, and spirits	4
Petition of Jennifer Bolton—Police contact mental health services for advice when a person is suicidal	5
Petition of Alison White on behalf of Safe Food Campaign New Zealand—Immediate reassessment and ban of insecticide chlorpyrifos	6
Petition of John Hearnshaw—New Zealand needs a national law to limit light pollution and promote dark skies.....	7
Petition of Kylee Kelly—Ban the use of shock collars on dogs.....	9
Petition of Rhodes Farming Partnership—Undertake a parliamentary inquiry into virtual fencing	11
Petition of Erin Tiplady on behalf of Northcote Intermediate School Room 3—Survey the RMS Niagara to find out exactly how much oil is still on board.....	13
Petition of Catrina McGregor—Inquire into Essure contraceptive device recall and compensate NZ women harmed	14
Petition of Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand—Prohibit the advertising of gambling	16
Further follow-up from our first interim report	18
Petition of Hāwea Flat School Board—Reconsider school bus provision for Hāwea Flat School	18
Petition of Arthur Yeo on behalf of New Zealand Equestrian Advocacy Network—Government designers of public infrastructure be required to meet equine needs.....	21
Appendix.....	23

Briefing on Government responses to committee recommendations

Recommendation

The Petitions Committee has considered a briefing on Government responses to committee recommendations, and recommends that the House take note of its second interim report.

About committee recommendations in petition reports

We report to the House on the petitions we consider. When we feel it is appropriate, we make recommendations to the Government in our reports. Other select committees do the same with the petitions they consider. When any committee includes recommendations to the Government in a petition report, the Government must, within 60 working days, present a paper to the House responding to the recommendations.¹ The Government is expected to report to the House on what action, if any, it has taken to implement recommendations made to it on petitions.

We seek updates from government departments on the progress made against Government responses to Petitions Committee recommendations. Our interim report in December 2025 summarised the first set of updates we received.² This interim report summarises the second set of updates received on recommendations made by Petitions Committees in the 53rd and 54th Parliaments.

¹ [Standing Order 256\(1\)](#). Government responses are tabled in the House and published on [the Parliament website](#).

² The first interim report on our Briefing on Government responses to committee recommendations, December 2025, is available on [the Parliament website](#).

Petition of Kevin Scott—Require holders of on-licences to provide zero-alcohol wines, beers, and spirits

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives amend legislation to require holders of on-licences and club licences to provide a range of zero-alcohol beers, wines, and spirits in addition to existing requirements to supply a reasonable range of zero-alcohol and low-alcohol products.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition and reported to the House in June 2024.³ We recommended to the Government that section 52 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 be amended to allow licensed venues to meet the requirements of this section by providing low-alcohol and/or zero-alcohol beverages.⁴

Government response

The Government response was due in September 2024. The response was presented to the House in September 2025.⁵ The Government accepted our recommendation. It said that the Ministry of Justice would include the proposal to amend section 52 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act in a bill to be introduced to the House by the Associate Minister of Justice in late 2025.

Update

The Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill was introduced to the House on 16 March 2026.⁶ At the time of this second interim report, the bill has been reported back by the Justice Committee and is awaiting its second reading. Clause 20 of the bill as introduced would amend section 52 of the Act to allow premises with a club licence or on-licence to stock drinks containing less than 1.15 percent ethanol instead of, or in addition to, low-alcohol drinks.

Our response

We welcome the implementation of our recommendation in the changes proposed by the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill.

³ Our report on the petition of Kevin Scott is available on [the Parliament website](#).

⁴ We noted in our report that “zero-alcohol” products may not be totally alcohol-free. Section 5 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act defines alcohol as a substance that at 20°C has 1.15 percent ethanol by volume. Drinks with less than 1.15 percent ethanol by volume are described as zero-alcohol, but trace elements of alcohol may remain in the drinks.

⁵ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Kevin Scott is available on [the Parliament website](#).

⁶ Information about the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill is available on [the Parliament website](#).

Petition of Jennifer Bolton—Police contact mental health services for advice when a person is suicidal

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives require police to contact mental health services for advice when a person expresses suicidal intentions and establish a mental health register; and note that 31 people have signed a similar petition.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition and reported to the House in October 2024.⁷ We recommended that the Police formally adopt as operational policy the Coroner's recommendation arising from the inquiry into the death of Jonathan Bolton that *Police should always contact mental health services for advice where a person in their care or custody expresses suicidal intentions, even if that person is intoxicated and even if there are no previous mental health or suicide risks identified.*

Government response

The Government response was due in February 2025, and was presented to the House that month.⁸ The response advised that Police operational policy now reflects this recommendation:

Police guidelines have recently been clarified to specify that where police are with someone who may be suicidal, they should connect the person and their family/whānau to professional health services at the earliest opportunity and before they leave the incident. If suicide is likely, Police are advised not to leave the person alone. This applies whether the person is in police custody or their care.

This policy directs Police staff to contact mental health services regardless of whether the person is intoxicated or not. Previous mental health history (or the absence of this) is not indicated to have an influence on decision making, each presentation is to be taken on its own merits.

Our response

We welcome the news that Police operational policy now reflects this recommendation.

⁷ Our report on the petition of Jennifer Bolton is available on [the Parliament website](#).

⁸ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Jennifer Bolton is available on [the Parliament website](#).

Petition of Alison White on behalf of Safe Food Campaign New Zealand—Immediate reassessment and ban of insecticide chlorpyrifos

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives urge the Minister for the Environment to progress an immediate reassessment and ban of the insecticide chlorpyrifos.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition and reported to the House in November 2024.⁹ We recommended to the Government that it ensure that the Environmental Protection Authority's review of chlorpyrifos progresses as quickly as possible.

Government response

The Government response was due in February 2025. It was presented to the House in May 2025.¹⁰ The response said that the review was under way, with a decision expected in August 2025.

Update

The Environmental Protection Authority announced on 10 July 2025 that all chlorpyrifos approvals are to be revoked, with varying phase-out periods of 6 to 18 months.¹¹

Our response

We are pleased that a decision has been made to ban the use of this insecticide.

⁹ Our report on the petition of Alison White on behalf of Safe Food Campaign New Zealand is available on [the Parliament website](#).

¹⁰ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Alison White on behalf of Safe Food Campaign New Zealand is available on [the Parliament website](#).

¹¹ Information about the Chlorpyrifos reassessment decision is available on [the Environmental Protection Authority's website](#).

Petition of John Hearnshaw—New Zealand needs a national law to limit light pollution and promote dark skies

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives introduce legislation to limit light pollution, following similar laws in France and Croatia, covering public and private exterior illumination and ensuring light is only used where and when it is essential.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition and reported to the House in November 2024.¹² We made three recommendations to the Government, that:

1. it investigate how to limit the growth of artificial light at night in New Zealand, including considering the option of establishing a set of national guidelines that could be voluntarily adopted by local councils
2. it begin this work in 2025 because developing an appropriate solution will take some time, and artificial light at night in New Zealand is increasing significantly each year
3. if the Government develops a set of national guidelines for light at night, the guidelines focus on the development of new facilities, buildings, and streets.

Government response

The Government response was due in March 2025 and was received that month.¹³ The response said that the Government was not proposing any additional action in response to the report. In response to the specific recommendations, it said the following:

1. The Government is not looking into voluntary guidelines for local councils on artificial light at this time.
2. The Government has a comprehensive work programme on resource management reform. This reform aims to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 as well as update the suite of national regulation. Any review of how artificial light is controlled would sensibly follow this phase of significant reform.
3. The Government is not looking to develop a set of national guidelines at this time.

The Government response also noted that:

Outside of the resource management system, the Government is investigating what the requirements are for New Zealand to be nationally accredited with DarkSky International to be a “dark sky” nation.

Follow-up with the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

We wrote to the Ministry for the Environment in February 2026 asking for an update on the Government’s investigation of the requirements for New Zealand to be nationally accredited

¹² Our report on the petition of John Hearnshaw is available on [the Parliament website](#).

¹³ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of John Hearnshaw is available on [the Parliament website](#).

with DarkSky International as a “dark sky” nation. We received a response from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, as the government agency that had undertaken work in this area.

The letter said that some initial scoping work had been undertaken in 2024; however, the work had not progressed beyond that initial scoping. The ministry said that, while this specific work did not progress, New Zealand’s dark skies continue to be recognised as an asset within the tourism system:

Tourism New Zealand has previously featured dark sky tourism in its destination storytelling, including in off-peak and winter-focused marketing. This sits alongside wider efforts from Government and industry to promote regional tourism and year-round visitation.

Our response

We observe that, if New Zealand’s dark skies are regarded as an asset within the tourism system as the ministry told us, future action on artificial light may be needed at some stage. The Government response said that any review of artificial light would naturally follow the Government’s resource management reforms. Those reforms are currently being considered in two bills.¹⁴

The Environment Committee has reported to the House on the bills.¹⁵ The committee noted that some submitters had sought increased protection for dark skies. It commented that it had been advised that the provisions of the two bills would not prevent national instruments to include standards relating to light.

We would like to see further work take place on this issue at an appropriate time.

¹⁴ Further information about the [Planning Bill](#) and the [Natural Environment Bill](#) is available on the Parliament website.

¹⁵ The report of the Environment Committee on the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill is available on the [Parliament website](#).

Petition of Kylee Kelly—Ban the use of shock collars on dogs

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives bans dog shock collars.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition and reported to the House in February 2025.¹⁶ We recommended that the Ministry for Primary Industries review the use of dog shock collars in New Zealand.

Government response

The Government response was due in May 2025. It was presented to the House in July 2025.¹⁷ The response said that the Code review work programme by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) would address the committee's recommendation.

The response said that the Associate Minister of Agriculture had notified NAWAC in May 2024 of the Government's expectation that Codes of Welfare for livestock sectors be prioritised and work on companion animal Codes of Welfare be paused. It said that once the production livestock Codes were progressed, it was expected that NAWAC would review the companion animal Codes.

Follow-up with the Ministry for Primary Industries

We wrote to the Ministry for Primary Industries in February 2026. We asked when the review of the Code of Welfare: Dogs was expected to occur, and whether our recommendation would be included in the scope of the review.

The ministry responded the same month. It told us that the Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare) had requested that the review of the Code of Welfare: Dogs be prioritised as soon as the NAWAC work programme allows. It said it was expected that the review may commence "later in 2026". It said NAWAC's work programme for 2026–2027 would be published on its website when it is finalised.

The ministry confirmed that our recommendation concerning the use of shock collars on dogs would be considered when the review of the Dog Code takes place.

Update

As of August 2026, NAWAC's work programme for 2026–2027 is not available on its website, and there is no information available on the website about when a potential review of the Code of Welfare: Dogs will take place.

Our response

We accept that NAWAC's review of the Code of Welfare: Dogs is the appropriate mechanism to consider our recommendation, but we would like confirmation about when that

¹⁶ Our report on the petition of Kylee Kelly is available on [the Parliament website](#).

¹⁷ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Kylee Kelly is available on [the Parliament website](#).

will happen. We intend to continue to follow this matter up with the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Petition of Rhodes Farming Partnership—Undertake a parliamentary inquiry into virtual fencing

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives undertakes an inquiry into virtual fencing to review which components of the currently available virtual fencing technology for dairy cows are or are not acceptable to the public, milk consumers, and export markets for milk products.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition and reported to the House in April 2025.¹⁸ We recommended to the Government that it include guidance on the use of virtual fencing technologies in the update of the Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle.

Government response

The Government response was due in July 2025, and was presented to the House that month.¹⁹ The response said that the Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle was under active review. It said that this review would be the appropriate place for the committee's recommendation to be considered and addressed. The response said it was expected that NAWAC's further recommendations for the Code would include aspects related to agricultural technologies, including virtual fencing.

Follow-up with the Ministry for Primary Industries

We wrote to the Ministry for Primary Industries in February 2026. We asked when the new Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle would be released, and whether our recommendation had been included in the scope of the review.

The ministry responded the same month. It said that NAWAC had completed its review of the Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle, and had considered our recommendation as part of its review. It said the Code was expected to be issued in 2026.

Update

As of August 2026, there is no information about the updated Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle available on the NAWAC website.²⁰

Our response

The Government response to our report on the petition of Kylee Kelly told us the Government had expressed its expectation in May 2024 that priority be given to reviewing Codes of welfare for livestock. Despite this prioritisation, we are concerned that, over a year after we made our recommendation on this petition, there is still no information available

¹⁸ Our report on the petition of Rhodes Farming Partnership is available on [the Parliament website](#).

¹⁹ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Rhodes Farming Partnership is available on [the Parliament website](#).

²⁰ [Home | NAWAC](#).

about the updated Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle. We intend to continue to follow this matter up with the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Petition of Erin Tiplady on behalf of Northcote Intermediate School Room 3—Survey the RMS Niagara to find out exactly how much oil is still on board

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives urge the Government to thoroughly inspect and survey the wreck of the RMS Niagara in the Hauraki Gulf for any oil that should be removed from it.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition and reported to the House in March 2025.²¹ We recommended to the Government that Maritime New Zealand prioritise a survey and risk assessment of the RMS *Niagara*.

Government response

The Government response was due in June 2025, and was presented to the House that month.²² The response said that the Government was not proposing that Maritime New Zealand prioritise a survey and risk assessment of the RMS *Niagara* at that time. However, it said that the Government would continue to monitor the situation should the condition of the wreck change and/or the fiscal environment allow.

Follow-up with Maritime New Zealand

We wrote to Maritime New Zealand in February 2026 asking for an update on the condition of the wreck of the RMS *Niagara*. Maritime New Zealand replied in March 2026 that there had been no change to the Government's decision, and so Maritime New Zealand has not been funded to undertake survey activity on the wreck. For that reason, it could not provide us with an update on the condition of the wreck.

However, Maritime New Zealand said it maintains a database of all reported spills. Where information is provided to it, Maritime New Zealand will assess the information provided and then decide whether further investigation is warranted. It said it had received no reports of spills, and had not observed surface oiling at the RMS *Niagara* site since February 2024.

Our response

We observe that it could be difficult for the Government to meet its stated intention to “monitor the situation should the condition of the wreck change”, if there are no resources to survey the condition of the wreck. However, we are pleased to hear that there have been no reports of spills or surface oiling in the past two years.

²¹ Our report on the petition of Erin Tiplady on behalf of Northcote Intermediate School Room 3 is available on [the Parliament website](#).

²² The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Erin Tiplady on behalf of Northcote Intermediate School Room 3 is available on [the Parliament website](#).

Petition of Catrina McGregor—Inquire into Essure contraceptive device recall and compensate NZ women harmed

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives initiate a full investigation into the promotion, funding, distribution and prescription of all Essure devices for NZ women; find, contact, and advise women who received these devices that they have been recalled; and offer full ACC coverage for any Essure-related care they may require.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition, and reported to the House in April 2025.²³ We recommended to the Government that it:

- amend the Medicines Act to require an application, assessment, and approval process for medical devices before they are supplied in New Zealand
- create a legislative mandate for reporting harm or injury caused by medical devices.

Government response

The Government response was due in July 2025, and was presented to the House that month.²⁴ The response said that the committee's recommendations would be appropriately addressed by the Medical Products Bill. The response said:

In September 2024, the Government agreed to replace the Medicines Act with modern regulation of medicines and medical devices under a Medical Products Bill. The purpose of this Bill will be to:

- support improved health outcomes for all New Zealanders by enabling timely access to safe, high quality and effective medical products, and to do this by
- providing cost-effective assurance that medical products meet acceptable standards of safety, quality, and efficacy or performance.

The Government believes the Medical Products Bill will be the most appropriate and efficient vehicle to introduce risk-proportionate regulation of medical devices, including contraceptives that are medical devices, which ensures they meet safety, quality and performance standards.

Update

In October 2025, the Associate Minister of Health announced that the Medical Products Bill was expected to be introduced to Parliament in 2026.²⁵

²³ Our report on the petition of Catrina McGregor is available on [the Parliament website](#).

²⁴ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Catrina McGregor is available on [the Parliament website](#).

²⁵ Hon Casey Costello, [Medical Products Bill taking shape | Beehive.govt.nz](#), 14 October 2025.

Follow-up with the Associate Minister of Health

In February 2026, we wrote to the Associate Minister of Health to ask how our recommendations were being taken into account in the development of the Medical Products Bill.

The Minister replied in March 2026 that the bill was expected to be introduced in mid-2026, subject to Cabinet approval and the Government's legislative programme. She said that it is intended that the bill would include a regulatory approval system for medical devices. The Minister said that would ensure that all medical devices meet safety, quality, and performance standards through a proportionate, risk-based regulatory approach. She said that the bill would enhance reporting requirements.

Our response

We are pleased to hear that our recommendations have been taken into account in the development of the bill. We look forward to seeing the bill when it is introduced to the House.

Petition of Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand— Prohibit the advertising of gambling

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives prohibit the advertising of all gambling in Aotearoa New Zealand (pokies, casinos, Lotto, TAB and online gambling), including on traditional media and online platforms; and note that 153 people signed a petition in support of this.

Committee recommendation

We considered this petition, and reported to the House in October 2025.²⁶ We recommended to the Government that it review the regulatory settings around gambling advertising in New Zealand.

Government response

The Government response was due in February 2026, and was received in January 2026.²⁷ It expressed support for restrictions on gambling advertising to ensure the greatest protection for vulnerable population groups. It said that, at that time, significant regulatory reform was being progressed concerning online casino gambling advertising. The Government response said it was important to embed and understand the impact of work on online casino gambling before further reviewing regulatory settings.

Update

In April 2026, the Online Casino Gambling Act 2026 was passed by Parliament.²⁸ The Act prohibits unlicensed online casino advertising. It provides for detailed regulations about online casino gambling advertising, gives the Department of Internal Affairs new enforcement powers to issue takedown notices, and increases penalties to a maximum of \$5 million for unlawful casino gambling advertising.²⁹

Follow up with the Minister of Internal Affairs

In July 2026, we wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs, asking for an update on the Government's work programme on gambling advertising.

The Minister replied in August 2026 that the Government's current work is focused on implementing the new regulatory regime for online casino gambling. The Online Casino Gambling Act came into force on 1 May 2026, and supporting regulations were established in July 2026. The regulations set out detailed rules for advertising, sponsorship, and promotions.

²⁶ Our report on the petition of Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand is available on [the Parliament website](#).

²⁷ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand is available on [the Parliament website](#).

²⁸ Information about the progress through the House of the Online Casino Gambling Act is available on [the Parliament website](#).

²⁹ Further information about the changes to advertising for licensed online casino gambling is available on the [Department of Internal Affairs website](#).

The Minister said that the next phase of implementation is a three-stage licensing process for up to 15 licensed operators of online casinos. Successful applicants will be issued with licences between 1 December 2026 and 1 June 2027. The Minister said that the Department of Internal Affairs will conduct a review of the legislative settings after the regime has been in operation for three years.

Our response

We thank the Minister for updating us about how new rules in the Online Casino Gambling Act governing advertising of online casino gambling will be implemented.

We were pleased that the Government response to our recommendation supports restrictions on gambling advertising to protect vulnerable population groups. However, our recommendation that the Government review the regulatory settings around gambling advertising in New Zealand was broader than online casino gambling advertising. We think that such a review is needed now, and that it should not wait three years until the online casino gambling advertising regulations are reviewed.

Further follow-up from our first interim report

This second interim report provides information about follow-up activity we have done for two of the petitions discussed in our first report.

Petition of Hāwea Flat School Board—Reconsider school bus provision for Hāwea Flat School

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives urge the Government to reconsider its decision regarding school bus provision for Hāwea Flat School.

Background

The petition was considered by the Petitions Committee of the 53rd Parliament. It reported to the House on the petition in November 2022.³⁰ It recommended that the Government reconsider several matters concerning school bus provision for Hāwea Flat School, including the use of runbacks.³¹

The Government response was presented to the House in May 2024.³² It said that the Ministry of Education considered that school bus provision was sufficient to meet the school's current needs, and that the ministry had continued to engage with the school.

We wrote to the ministry in September 2025 asking for an update. The ministry responded in October 2025. We included information from the ministry's response in our first interim report on this briefing. We noted that the ministry said:

- since the implementation of the changes in April 2024, the ministry has remained in contact with the school
- feedback from both the bus operator and the school indicates that the runbacks are functioning effectively
- the ministry is continuing to monitor the situation to make sure that school bus provision for the school remains fit for purpose.

We commented in our report that we were pleased to hear that communication had continued with the school community and bus operators, and that the ministry was continuing to monitor the situation.

Feedback from Hāwea Flat School

Following the publication of our interim report in December 2025, we received feedback from Hāwea Flat School. The school told us:

- it has had no contact from the ministry since late 2024 on this matter
- capacity issues on the buses were addressed only for a short period in 2024

³⁰ The report of the Petitions Committee of the 53rd Parliament on the petition of Hāwea Flat School Board is available on [the Parliament website](#).

³¹ A runback is where a single bus either runs an identical route twice, or runs a portion of the route first, then the bus returns to the school to pick up more students and continue the rest of the run.

³² The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Hāwea Flat School Board is available on [the Parliament website](#).

- similar issues have arisen as the school has continued to grow
- at times students on the bus have been near to or at seating capacity, with students sitting three to a seat.

Further follow-up with the Ministry of Education

In February 2026, we wrote a further follow-up letter to the Ministry of Education. We asked the ministry to give us details of its communication with the school since April 2024, and of the monitoring it had undertaken to ensure that school bus provision remains fit for purpose.

The ministry replied in March 2026. In response to our enquiry about communication with the school since April 2024, it replied:

We understand that our local Transport Delivery Advisor had a phone conversation with the school about its school bus provision towards the end of 2025. However, as this staff member retired in October 2025, we are unable to formally confirm this.

The ministry said that a loading limit is specified on a vehicle's Certificate of Loading. It said that, so long as the loading limit is not exceeded, its contractors are permitted to carry standing passengers, and that primary school students can be seated three to a bench seat on some vehicles. The ministry said that bus operators are required to regularly report any standing passengers, which allows the ministry to monitor student numbers. It said that the operator of the Hāwea Flat School bus services had not indicated that buses used for the school are nearing the limits in their Certificates of Loading.

The ministry said it encourages schools to contact it if there is a change to the number or location of eligible students. It said that it contacted the bus operator in February 2026 for an update on the runback service, and the operator reported no concerns.

Our response

The ministry told us in October 2025 that it had remained in contact with the school since April 2024. We are disappointed to learn that this contact may have consisted of a single phone call from a staff member who has since retired. We do not consider that this can accurately be described as ongoing contact with the school.

The ministry also told us in October 2025 that feedback from the school and the bus operator was that the runbacks were functioning effectively, and that the ministry was continuing to monitor the situation. The ministry's letter indicates that this feedback and monitoring only meant it had not received notification from the bus operator that the bus was nearing its loading limit. The ministry reported a single phone call with the bus operator in February 2026. We consider that the terms "feedback" and "monitoring" imply more active communication with the school and bus operator than appears to have been the case.

We are concerned that the ministry's assurance to us that it was maintaining contact with the school and bus operator was exaggerated and disputed. We sought reassurance that the ministry is actively engaged with the school on this matter.

Further update from the Ministry of Education

We wrote to the Ministry of Education on 13 August 2026 expressing disappointment with its communication with us about its contact with the school and the bus operator, and informing the ministry that we intended to comment on that in this report.

The ministry acknowledged that its previous correspondence to us was unclear. It told us that it did not mean to imply that monitoring involved direct, proactive contact with the school.

The ministry told us that Hāwea Flat School contacted the ministry in April 2026 to request a route review. It said that, as a result of this review, from 17 August 2026 an additional school bus service has been provided for students attending Hāwea Flat School. The ministry said that the additional service addresses the concerns raised by the petition.

Petition of Arthur Yeo on behalf of New Zealand Equestrian Advocacy Network—Government designers of public infrastructure be required to meet equine needs

The petition requested:

That the House of Representatives ensure, through legislation, that central and local government designers and planners of public works and policy are required to consider, inform, consult and include equestrian user's needs in the design and construction of all roading, pathways, reserves and parks.

Background

The petition was considered by the Petitions Committee of the 53rd Parliament. It reported to the House on the petition in March 2023.³³ The committee made four recommendations to the Government. One of those recommendations was that:

Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 section 11.14 be rewritten to provide greater clarity, using the more commonly used term of berm or verge, rather than road margin.

The Government response was presented to the House in December 2023.³⁴ The response said that changes to the Land Transport (Road User) Rule section 11.14 would be considered when the Rule was next reviewed.

We wrote to the Ministry of Transport and New Zealand Transport Agency | Waka Kotahi (NZTA) in September 2025 asking for an update on the Government's response, including the review of the Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004.

The ministry and NZTA provided a combined response in October 2025. The ministry said it was not actively reviewing this section of the Rule. However, it said the matter might be considered in the Government's Rules Reform programme.³⁵

Further follow-up with the Minister of Transport

In December 2025, we wrote a follow-up letter to the Minister of Transport. We said that the Petitions Committee of the 53rd Parliament had noted on page 12 of its report that the ministry and NZTA had given different answers to questions about the application of section 11.14 of the Rule. We said:

We agree with the Petitions Committee of the 53rd Parliament that section 11.14 of the Rule needs to be reviewed. If there is confusion between the ministry and NZTA about the exact meaning of the current wording, as shown in the hearing on that petition, then we think it is unlikely that horse riders and other road users will have sufficient clarity on the matter.

³³ The report of the Petitions Committee of the 53rd Parliament on the petition of Arthur Yeo on behalf of New Zealand Equestrian Advocacy Network is available on [the Parliament website](#).

³⁴ The Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee of the 53rd Parliament on the petition of Arthur Yeo on behalf of New Zealand Equestrian Advocacy Network is available on [the Parliament website](#).

³⁵ Further information about the Land Transport Rules Reform Programme is available on [the Ministry of Transport's website](#).

It is important that commitments made to the House in Government responses to committee recommendations are followed through. As the Government is now undertaking a review of land transport rules, we ask that Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 section 11.14 is included in that Rules Reform programme.

The Minister replied in March 2026. He acknowledged that the Government had committed to considering a review of section 11.14 of the Rule. He said that officials had considered whether to include this change as part of the Rules Reform programme. However, the Minister said that such a review would be complex and would require further analysis, and did not meet the scope of changes the Government was considering.

The Minister said:

Horse riders are a small part of the transport network. Household Travel Survey data from 2015 to 2025 found that horse riders made up 0.006% of total trips made in New Zealand. Progressing a review of section 11.14 would require the reprioritisation of other work that may have larger benefits for the transport system and its users.

Our response

We are disappointed that the commitment that changes to Land Transport (Road User) Rule section 11.14 would be considered when the Rule was next reviewed has not been honoured. We think there was an opportunity missed in the recent review of transport rules.

The core request of the petition of Arthur Yeo on behalf of New Zealand Equestrian Advocacy Network was that equestrian road users be included and considered in decisions about road use. The reason given for not including the review of section 11.14 of the Rule in the current Rules Reform programme is that horse riders are only a very small part of the road user community. We observe that this may raise further concerns for equestrian road users about the attention given to their needs.

Appendix

Committee procedure

We began considering this briefing on 7 December 2023 and finalised this second interim report on 27 August 2026.

Committee members

Greg O'Connor (Chairperson)

Carl Bates (until 29 January 2025)

Hon Andrew Bayly (from 1 July 2026)

Kahurangi Carter (to 8 May 2024, and from 29 January 2025 to 11 February 2026)

Greg Fleming

Paulo Garcia (from 29 January 2025 to 1 July 2026)

Francisco Hernandez (from 8 May 2024 to 29 January 2025)

Celia Wade-Brown (from 11 February 2026)