



Platform Members' Leadership Day 2026

Mental health and Addiction NGO and Community Sector

Theme: Together We lead: Insights, Impact, Value

A Sound Investment building on the capability of the MH&A NGO and community sector

This year's focus is on collective leadership and collaboration – maximising influence, transforming knowledge, capability, and experience into visible system improvements.

Join us:

- **Learn to turn disruption into your advantage** – lead with vision, clarity, and bold integrity.
- **Connect with ambitious leaders** shaping the future with the resources they have.
- **Leave inspired** to act collectively, create change, and deliver impact and value.
- **Learn about shared leadership** maximising influence and the power of collaboration.

Thursday 19 March 2026, 9.00 am to 4.30 pm

Oceania Room, Level 3, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Wellington

TIME	ACTIVITY	SPEAKERS
8.15 am – 9.00 am	Registration	
9.00 am – 9.20 am	Mihi Whakatau Welcome	Karaitiana Tickell Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Purapura Whetu Trust Phyllis Tangitu, Mana Whakahaere Emerge Aotearoa Anaru Hawkins Kaihautū, Pathways
	Introduction and housekeeping	Sally Pitts-Brown Chairperson of Platform & Chief Executive, Pathways
9.30 am – 10.00 am	Opening address Setting the scene: Direction and expectations for 2026/27	Hon Matt Doocey Minister for Mental Health
10.00 am – 10.45 am	The opportunities – Insights to action Optimising resources – the role and impact of the NGO and community sector	Dr Frances Hughes, CNZM Board member, Health NZ

10.45 AM – 11.30 AM | MORNING TEA AND LEG STRETCH

11.30 am – 12.15 noon	Maximising: How to operate effectively in a general election year - 5 must dos and don'ts.	Dr Mai Chen Barrister
12.15 pm – 12.45 pm	Networking Circles: Conversations Interactive speed networking on matters of collective interest.	Sally Pitts-Brown Platform Board chairperson

12.45 PM – 1.30 PM | LUNCH AND NETWORKING

1.30 pm – 2.15 pm	Practical insights on the use of Artificial Intelligence and Technology	Garry Johnston GM Digital and Innovation, Pinnacle
2.15 pm – 3.00 pm	Adding impact and value – where to from here? Leveraging off the Mental Health and Addiction Improvement Programme	Phil Grady National Director, Mental Health and Addiction, Health NZ

3.00 PM TO 3.20 PM | AFTERNOON TEA

3.20 pm – 4.00pm	Futuristic leadership, disruption and digital innovation Do not be scared – you can be impactful and add value. Anticipating trends and signs, signals from the future	Melissa Clark-Reynolds ONZM, ChFInstD
4:00 pm – 4.15 pm	Reflections from the Day	
4.15 pm – 4.30 pm	Summary and whakakape closure	Sally Pitts-Brown Chairperson of Platform & Chief Executive, Pathways Memo Musa Chief Executive, Platform Anaru Hawkins Kaihautū, Pathways

SPEAKERS

Hon Matt Doocey



Matt Doocey is the Minister for Mental Health, Minister and Associate Minister of Health. Matt has been the MP for Waimakariri since the 2014 election.

He previously worked in mental health in New Zealand and the UK, before returning home to work at the Canterbury District Health Board.

Matt went to St Bede's College before completing a BSc (Hons) in Social Policy, an MA in Healthcare Management from Kingston University in London, and an MSc in Global Politics from Birkbeck College, University of London.

Dr Frances Hughes

RN, BA, MA, DNurs, FNZCMHN, FAAN, JJP, CNZM



Dr Hughes is a practicing Registered Nurse with over 35 years' nursing and in international health experience. She is a recognised leader in her field and has a BA, MA and Doctorate in Nursing.

Dr Hughes has held executive management and nursing positions on a regional and global level and was formerly Group General Manager for clinical and Care for Oceania Health Care (LTD), Deputy Director of Mental Health, Professor of Nursing and Mental Health (UOA), Chief Nurse for New Zealand, Chief Nursing and Midwifery officer for Queensland and the Chief Executive of the International Council of

Nurses (Geneva). She worked for the World Health Organisation with 16 countries throughout the Pacific. Dr Hughes and her husband also owned and operated businesses in the Mana region, including a mental health residential facility based in Kapiti.

Dr Mai Chen



Dr Mai Chen (LLB(Hons)(Otago), (LLM(Harvard), HonLLD(Otago), CMInstD), is a top barrister in NZ and President of NZ Asian Lawyers. She was previously

Previously Mai Chen was the Managing Partner of Chen Palmer Public and Employment Law Specialists, Aotearoa New Zealand's first boutique law firm and Australasia's first specialist public law firm, founded alongside former Prime Minister Sir Geoffrey Palmer. She is an independent non-executive Director on the Bank of New Zealand Board,

where she chairs the People and Remuneration Committee, and has served as a member of the New Zealand Securities Commission. Mai is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Auckland's Business School and Law School, the inaugural Chair of Global Women and the Superdiversity Institute, and President of NZ Asian Lawyers. A two-time New Zealander of the Year finalist and globally recognised diversity leader, she is also a prolific author of books, inquiry reports and articles.

Phil Grady



Phil Grady was permanently appointed as National Director of Mental Health and Addiction across Health New Zealand in December 2025. Mental Health and Addiction across Health New Zealand in December 2025. Phil's role is to lead our mental health and addictions system and be a single point of accountability for our services. The role reports to the Chief Executive.

Phil had been working at Oranga Tamariki (where he was DCE for System Leadership) and has extensive experience in mental health and addictions having worked as the Acting Deputy Director General Mental Health and Addictions at Manatū Hauora in his previous role.

His other experience in the health sector includes working as Executive Director, Strategy, Funding and Public Health at Waikato DHB and as the Chief Executive Officer of drug and addiction service Odyssey House.

Garry Johnston



Garry Johnson is GM Digital and Innovation at Pinnacle.

Garry has led data and digital programmes through New Zealand's health system transformation, holding roles as National Programmes Lead and Regional Lead for Te Manawa Taki at Te Whatu Ora, and Executive Director Digital at Waikato DHB. His work spans strategic leadership, healthcare data governance, and digital transformation across both district health boards and primary health organisations. He is presently the GM of Digital and Innovation for Pinnacle, a Primary Health Organisation serving communities across the middle of the North Island.

Garry's current focus is to explore and adopt technologies with the community and general practice settings that remove friction and enhance understanding and connection.

Although we are very early in the technology journey of this wave of innovation, Garry is keen to share insights and learnings around AI and how this is already making a positive difference within healthcare as well as share some tips and tricks to get the best from this technology.

Melissa Clark-Reynolds ONZM



Melissa Clark-Reynolds is a street-smart futurist and tech entrepreneur who helps leaders cut through noise, tackle change head-on and build clear pathways to tomorrow.

Trained by the Institute for the Future and appointed an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to the technology industry, she's worked with everyone from Spark, the Drug Foundation, Burnett Foundation, Wise Group, Kia Puawai to NASA and Australian Pork, tackling everything from company strategy to digital disruption. Melissa brings principled insight and practical tools that help teams turn uncertainty into direction.

People often leave her sessions with their minds blown and their thinking reset — about risk, responsibility, and what to act on now. Whether she's guiding a CEO through a tough transition or challenging a conference audience on the future of AI, Melissa is known for her grounded foresight and ability to call it like it is, with clarity and warmth.