

# ACC Work Capacity Certification and Physiotherapy in New Zealand: A Solution-based Response to ACC Certification Delays and Associated Consequences

Physiotherapy New Zealand and Occupational Health Physiotherapy Group



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## Acknowledgements

This paper was compiled as part of a larger working group project on behalf of Physiotherapy New Zealand (PNZ) and its Occupational Health Physiotherapy Group (OHPG). We would like to acknowledge the wider working group members for their contributions towards this project.

Brin Williams, Craig Leong, Dane O'Connor, Holly Lucas, Kara Thomas, Kurt Thomas, Luca Maremmi, Mark Silvester, Mathieu Wilson, Matt Haycock, Ryan Lobb, Shane Warner, Teresa Peterson-Hoult, Victoria Purdy, Warsha Pandit.

## Terms of Use

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## Executive Summary

In New Zealand an estimated 4,400 workdays are lost every month due to Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) claimants' inability to access primary practitioners in a timely manner, who can review and revise their work capacity certification status.

Access to a general practitioner (GP) is being delayed due to limited availability.

It is recognised and accepted that delays in accessing a GP have fiscal and equity consequences for ACC claimants.

The Physiotherapy New Zealand (PNZ) Occupational Health Physiotherapy Group (OHPG) have advised PNZ of these increasing delays in ACC claimants accessing timely work capacity certification. The impact of these delays on claimants is evident in their recovery and the estimated accrual of cost to ACC (and therefore indirectly to all individuals within NZ who pay levies to the fund) of additional time off work.

Improved access to work capacity certification for ACC claimants can be easily achieved by increasing the pool of appropriately skilled primary practitioners, specifically physiotherapists, who can also provide this service as it is already within their scope of practice.

PNZ wishes to collaborate with ACC and our medical colleagues to explore both short-term and long-term solutions to the issue of work capacity certification delays.

The OHPG Work Capacity Certification Working Group proposes amending ACC legislation and/or operational guidelines to include physiotherapists as eligible practitioners able to assess and certify work capacity under ACC legislation.

This will reduce ACC's current cost burden risk, which is partly caused by ACC claimants being off work for longer than necessary, with delayed recovery times and loss of productivity.

Earlier return to work and shorter recovery times benefits both workers and employers. They mitigate the risk to ACC and the NZ workforce, resulting in significant cost savings and benefits for ACC and the injured worker.

This paper highlights the benefits and notes the considerations of recommended changes.

## Background

1. The concept of work is extremely important and necessary to the survival of society. (1, 2) Work involves the application of physical or mental effort, skills, knowledge, or other personal resources. It usually involves commitment over time and has connotations of effort and a need to labour or exert oneself.(3, 4) Work is not only 'a job' or paid employment but also includes unpaid or voluntary work, education and training, family responsibilities, and caring.(5)
2. Primary care is changing globally. The issues are being compounded by an aging workforce, extended retirement age, expanding populations, worsening population health indices in some areas, reduced healthcare budgets, and a declining health practitioner-to-public ratio.(6, 7)
3. All parts of society, including employers, workers, governments, families and communities, benefit when the ability to work is maximised, and any work disability is transformed back into work ability.(8-10) Long-term work absence has many negative consequences.(10) It has an adverse impact on mental and physical health, high social and economic costs, and can result in permanent work disability.(11-12)
4. Early return to work after an injury is common and beneficial, but not possible for everyone. (11) Certifying time off work—particularly when absence is long-term—can have significant side effects, including increased rates of overall mortality, poorer physical health, and poorer mental health and psychological well-being. (11)
5. Evidence-based messages highlight:(11)
  - Most common health conditions will not be 'cured' by treatment
  - Good work is a therapeutic intervention, it is part of treatment
  - Typically, waiting for recovery delays recovery
  - Staying away from work may lead to depression, isolation and poorer health
  - Employer-supported early return to work helps quicker recovery, prevents de-conditioning and helps provide injured workers with appropriate social contacts and support mechanisms.
6. The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) (*Te Kaporeihana Āwhina Hunga Whara*) is the New Zealand Crown entity responsible for administering the country's no-fault accidental injury compensation scheme, commonly referred to as the ACC scheme. The scheme provides financial compensation and support to citizens, residents, and temporary visitors who have suffered personal injuries. (13)
7. Equitable and timely access to health services is a priority for ACC, with recently developed Kaupapa Māori health services following ACC's acknowledgment that Māori have been disadvantaged in accessing or using ACC services.(14,15,16)
8. Work capacity certification has traditionally been the domain of general practitioners in primary care globally and in NZ. (13,17) However, the physiotherapy profession is primarily involved in identifying and maximising quality of life and movement potential within the spheres of health promotion, prevention, treatment/intervention, and rehabilitation.(18, 19) This is across all spheres of medicine, including musculoskeletal, orthopaedics, occupational health, pain management, neurology, cardiovascular, mental health, oncology, palliative care, and surgical, through all stages of life.(20, 21)
9. Physiotherapists in New Zealand have traditionally undertaken a four-year undergraduate degree, as a minimum, for many years and often share the entry-level year with medical, dentistry and veterinary students. Physiotherapists have held primary care status since 1982, recognising their ability and competence to accept referrals

directly, undertake necessary assessments, make differential diagnoses, and treat accordingly. As with all regulated health professionals, they are registered, required to hold an annual practising certificate and work only under their scope of practice. This may include declining referrals if they are inappropriate, referring to the GP or directly to another appropriate health professional for further evaluation or a second opinion. (21)

10. Physiotherapists in New Zealand have been able to legally provide work capacity certificates to guide employers and funders for many years (21) and have been able to accept ACC self-referrals since 1999. This demonstrates that physiotherapists already possess the competency to deliver this service. However, physiotherapists are unable to write ACC work capacity certificates linked to compensation payments due to long-standing legislative restrictions reflecting earlier models of care and service delivery. (22, 23)
11. In recent times, injured workers, employers, and treating practitioners have reported difficulty accessing a GP in a timely manner to have their work capacity certificates initiated, reviewed, or renewed. (24) In August 2024, PNZ carried out a survey on work capacity certification. The survey revealed that 43% of respondents indicated delays of 8-14 days, with 31% indicating delays of 15 days or more. 3% indicated delays of more than one month in being able to see their GP for a work capacity certificate. 11% of providers who responded indicated a certificate could be obtained within the week of being fit to return to work. Amongst the cohort of providers, at least 4,400 days of delay per month were identified. The potential savings to ACC of a timely work capacity certification as soon as capacity is identified are likely to be significant. (25)
12. Furthermore, 94.4% of respondents supported physiotherapists certifying work capacity if training and support were provided. 88% were confident in delivering work capacity certificates, and the same number expected confidence to improve with designated training modules. Where physiotherapists have provided work capacity certification [non-accident related], 94% report faster return to work outcomes. The PNZ OHPG have confirmed that a training framework can be developed to ensure a consistent, robust approach by all physiotherapists working within this field of practice. The members have also provided PNZ with 219 qualitative examples of where delays to timely work capacity certification have incurred unnecessary costs. (25)
13. The recent GP workforce documents released by the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) indicate a worsening level of burnout and a rapidly ageing workforce, with 57% of GPs aged  $\geq 50$  years and more than one-third of the country's GPs planning to retire within the next 5 years. (26-28) Unsurprisingly, this shortage is expected to be particularly acute in rural and high-needs urban areas. The latest GPNZ Sustainability in Primary Care report says "A growing number of practices are struggling to survive". (26)
14. General Practice New Zealand Chair Dr Bryan Betty recently stated that about 50% of their practices have closed their books to new patients and are not accepting new patients. They estimate they are currently short of 300-400 GPs across New Zealand. They have only been training 200 specialist general practitioners per year, instead of the 400 needed, resulting in a significant shortage. (27)
15. Medical specialists can also write ACC certification, but access to these services was anticipated to become more difficult, leading to a lack of integration between occupational medicine and primary care. (16)
16. The use of physiotherapists in New Zealand to assist in the writing of ACC work capacity certificates is a logical choice as they are already qualified to do so; it is within their

scope of practice and they have extensive knowledge in function and movement, functional capacity, injury and illness diagnosis and management. (20, 21)

17. There is overwhelming support within the physiotherapy profession for physiotherapists to complete work capacity certificates under ACC.
18. An ACC work capacity certificate typically initiates an onward referral by ACC for vocational rehabilitation services. It is predominantly occupational health physiotherapists who undertake the worksite assessment and meet with the injured worker and employer to identify job tasks, any lighter or modified duties, and equipment needs, among other required supports. These same physiotherapists develop, review and revise the return-to-work plans for injured workers, which any subsequent work capacity certificates reflect. GPs report that these are very helpful in reviewing, revising, or clearing injured individuals for work. This would continue for whoever is signing the ACC work capacity certificates.
19. Physiotherapy services play significant roles in delivering high-value care, including rehabilitation and self-management for injuries and long-term conditions. However, in Māori and Pacific populations, low socioeconomic and rural populations there are many barriers to accessing care. These populations are also disproportionately represented in physical injuries related to heavy manual handling work, such as forestry, horticulture, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and fishing. (29). A majority Māori in New Zealand live in the North Island, particularly in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and the Northeastern regions of Gisborne and Northland. (30)
20. There are approximately 11 physiotherapists per 10,000 population, and they are widely dispersed in regional and rural areas for easy access to these populations. When added to the GP population, this should ensure that there will be adequate access for ACC claimants to get timely access to work capacity certification.(31)
21. Currently, the only barrier for New Zealand physiotherapists to be able to write ACC work capacity certificates is the ACC legislation that currently restricts the delivery of this service to medical practitioners and nurse practitioners. (13)
22. There is already a precedent set for ACC operational process changes to meet the improved provision of health care services to ACC claimants. The most recent operational changes to have been made were in 2024 within the audiology, Chinese medicine and paramedic sectors. (32)
23. The access issues in primary health for work capacity certification are not New Zealand specific. Access issues occur globally and are noted to delay the recertification process, causing unnecessary time off work, contributing to difficulty returning to work, and can be both a direct and indirect financial cost to the patient. (33, 34) Work capacity certification and treatment costs are borne by the patient, despite the International Labour Organisation (ILO), of which New Zealand is a member, requesting that injured workers not be financially disadvantaged when they are injured. (35)
24. There is also growing support and evidence for physiotherapists to complete work capacity certificates globally. Professional bodies in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom (UK) have supported this proposal. Governments within the UK and New South Wales, Australia, recognised the need to involve non-medical clinicians as the primary care crisis hastened in response to the COVID pandemic. (36) Both jurisdictions continue to permit physiotherapists to complete work capacity certificates.

25. Better work-related outcomes and improved ill health through direct access to physiotherapy have been recognised, alongside cost savings with fewer days off work when physiotherapists complete work capacity certificates. (36-40)
26. Through the rehabilitation process, physiotherapists increase the worker's functional capacity to meet work demands. (28) Decreasing the number of days off work is a positive factor in terms of cost savings and the health of the worker. (13, 39)
27. The First Contact Practitioner model in the UK has shown positive results, with physiotherapists completing work capacity certificates.(40) In Australia, treating physiotherapists can already sign subsequent certificates that a GP has initially signed. (39) This was carried out to lessen the burden on primary care. This has been in place for decades in Victoria and occurred more recently in NSW, while other states are looking at following suit .(41-43)
28. Physiotherapists in New Zealand can work alongside patients and employers for long periods, and they have a good understanding of the workplace needs and requirements. Over a one-month period, a physiotherapist may see a patient up to eight times, so there is already the opportunity to provide work capacity certificates during that consultation without further burdening medical practices. There are also cost savings for the patient as they are currently required to access their medical practice at an additional cost for an ACC work capacity certificate, whilst also visiting their physiotherapist for treatment.
29. The recent changes to ACC regulations allowing paramedics to be funded as treatment providers should improve access to treatment by helping to alleviate the shortage of primary care health professionals, especially in rural areas. (44) The paramedics providing ACC treatment should largely be undertaking treatment that would have occurred anyway. It would previously have been performed by another medical professional, but possibly not as soon and for a slightly higher cost. Allowing physiotherapists in New Zealand to complete ACC work capacity certificates will facilitate faster access to certification at no increased cost to ACC, as work capacity certificates would need to be completed anyway.

## The Solution:

### Allow physiotherapists to complete ACC work capacity certificates.

The pathway for this change could include:

1. Alter Operating Processes
2. Alter Primary legislative change - Section 102 2A of the Accident Compensation Act 2001
3. Alter Secondary legislative change

PNZ recognises that a pragmatic approach is required due to the urgency of this matter. Therefore, PNZ proposes that ACC consider a prompt amendment to current operating processes, with a long-term aim of a primary legislative change. There is already a precedent set for operational process changes within audiometry, Chinese medicine, and paramedic professions, and these have been successful.

## Conclusion

The primary health sector is being increasingly challenged, and access to care is being delayed for all individuals within New Zealand, including ACC claimants. Therefore, it makes sense that we proceed with this simple positive change.

Implementing a programme to allow physiotherapists to complete ACC work capacity certificates will facilitate timely access to appropriate care, reduce the burden of musculoskeletal disorders and the cost of care, and enhance the ACC claimant experience. This will also enhance the multi-disciplinary approach to patient care and assist with the access issues currently present in New Zealand. The flow-on effect will be a direct impact on decreasing the ongoing ACC costs to the Corporation and to all individuals within New Zealand who pay levies to support this fund. It will also assist employers who rely on a healthy, stable and available workforce to operate their businesses with maximum efficiency and productivity levels.

## Signatories



Kirsten Davie  
President Physiotherapy New Zealand  
Dip. Phys., Dip MT., PgCert Rehab., Expert Practitioner, MPNZ., MBA



Shane Meys  
Chair Occupational Health Physiotherapy Group - Physiotherapy New Zealand  
PGDip (Sport and Exercise), MHPprac (Rehabilitation with Dist.)

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Wednesday, 9 October 2024

Clare Foster  
Manager of Professional Practice  
Physiotherapy New Zealand

By Email: [clare.foster@physiotherapy.org.nz](mailto:clare.foster@physiotherapy.org.nz)

Dear Ms Foster

**Scope of Practice – Work Capacity**

I refer to recent discussions relating to the "Scope of Practice – Physiotherapist" as set by the Physiotherapy Board under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

I can confirm that it is inside the physiotherapy scope of practice for a physiotherapist to assess and provide advice on whether or not a person is able to engage in employment.

As with all other activities inside the physiotherapy scope of practice, the Board's *Physiotherapists practising in a defined field* Standard will apply to physiotherapists undertaking such assessments.

You are welcome to share this letter with third parties, and please let me know if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



**James Dunne**  
Registrar

9<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Sandra Kirby  
CEO  
Physiotherapy New Zealand  
PO Box 403  
Wellington 6140

**Re: Amending the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001**

Kia ora Sandra,

As Dean of the School of Physiotherapy, I fully endorse and support your proposal to amend the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001, specifically Section 102, to include physiotherapists as authorised professionals to assess and certify eligibility for compensation.

I wholeheartedly agree that the expertise in diagnosing and treating physical impairments and disabilities makes physiotherapists well-suited to assess patients' functional abilities and determine their capacity to work and this should most certainly extend to certifying a patient's eligibility for compensation with accident related injuries.

I see this as highly beneficial to both the patients and the health system as a whole.

Kā mihi nou



Professor Leigh Hale  
Dean, School of Physiotherapy

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9th November 2024

Sandra Kirby  
CEO Physiotherapy New Zealand  
PO Box 403  
Wellington 6140

Re: Amending the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001

Kia ora Sandra,

As Professor and Head of Physiotherapy at Auckland University of Technology, I express my full support for the proposed amendment to Section 102 of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001, enabling physiotherapists to assess and certify eligibility for compensation.

Given physiotherapists' extensive expertise in diagnosing and treating physical impairments and their deep understanding of functional capacity and work-related requirements, they are ideally positioned to make informed decisions regarding patients' work capacity and accident-related compensation eligibility.

This amendment would streamline the process for patients and contribute to more efficient utilisation of our healthcare resources. Our physiotherapy programme at AUT, as one of New Zealand's leading educational institutions in this field, recognises the crucial role physiotherapists play in comprehensive patient care and assessment.

The proposed change aligns well with contemporary physiotherapy practice and would enhance the profession's ability to provide comprehensive patient care while reducing unnecessary delays in the certification process.

Ngā mihi nui,



Professor Paul Sowman  
Head of Physiotherapy  
Auckland University of Technology

30 July 2025

Simon Hoar  
Chief Executive Officer, Physiotherapy NZ  
PO Box 403  
Wellington 6140

**Re: Amending the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001**

Tēnā koe Simon,

As Head of the Physiotherapy programme at Wintec Institute of Technology I express my support for the proposed changes to Section 102 of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001 enabling physiotherapists to assess and certify eligibility for compensation.

Considering the comprehensive education and clinical training undertaken by physiotherapists in the diagnosis and management of physical impairments physiotherapists are well-positioned to evaluate functional ability, determine work capacity, and certify eligibility for compensation.

The proposed amendment would make better use of clinical resources, improve efficiency, and improve patient care.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Rob Moran  
Head of Physiotherapy  
Centre for Health and Social Practice

16 October 2024

Sandra Kirby  
CEO  
Physiotherapy New Zealand

Dear Sandra,

**NZISM SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE ACCIDENT COMPENSATION ACT**

Thank you for contacting the New Zealand Institute of Safety Management to ask for support in amending the Accident Compensation Act 2001 to enable physiotherapists to assess and certify eligibility for compensation under that Act. NZISM is happy to support this request and for you to share our letter of support with decision-makers and others.

NZISM is the largest body for health and safety professionals in New Zealand with 2,800 members, particularly health and safety advisors, managers, and consultants. Our members are often closely involved in injured people returning to work.

We are concerned at New Zealand's declining rehabilitation performance. We believe that part of this may be due to difficulty seeing a GP. Our view is that physiotherapists are well placed to assess ability to work (including partial or total incapacity to do so) and to provide advice and support to enable injured people to return to work. Enabling physiotherapists to undertake this certification may assist to take pressure off other parts of the health system.

We wish you every success in your advocacy efforts on this issue.

Yours sincerely



Jeff Sissons  
Chief Executive Officer  
New Zealand Institute of Safety Management

13 August 2025

Kia ora Simon

Thank you for your letter outlining the proposal to amend Section 102 of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001 to enable physiotherapists to assess and certify eligibility for compensation.

I fully support this amendment. Physiotherapists are highly skilled professionals who play a central role in the management and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries. Allowing them to certify ACC claims would:

- Improve timeliness of care and reduce unnecessary delays for injured New Zealanders
- Support better recovery outcomes through earlier intervention
- Relieve pressure on general practitioners and nurse practitioners, making better use of health resources

This change aligns well with the principles of equity, efficiency, and patient-centred care, and reflects the collaborative, multidisciplinary approach that modern healthcare demands.

I endorse your submission and am happy for my support to be noted as part of your advocacy for this legislative amendment.

Kind regards,

**Dr Lance O'Sullivan**

Ngā mihi



**Dr Lance O'Sullivan,**

**Managing Director of Navilluso Medical Limited**

14 August 2025

Simon Hoar  
CEO  
Physiotherapy New Zealand

Dear Simon,

**CHASNZ SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE ACCIDENT COMPENSATION ACT**

Construction Health and Safety New Zealand (CHASNZ) is pleased to support Physiotherapy New Zealand in your drive to amend the Accident Compensation Act 2001- to enable physiotherapists to assess and certify eligibility for compensation under that Act.

CHASNZ is an industry-led charitable trust working to improve the lives of construction workers by raising the standard of health, safety and wellbeing in construction. A vital part of our focus on the wellbeing of the construction workforce is how we prevent and manage injuries that can occur on the job.

In recent years our workers who have suffered injury have been off work for increasingly longer periods of time due to factors like access to a general practitioner and timely health care. We acknowledge the longer someone is away from work the less the chance is of returning to that job.

We believe that physiotherapists are well placed to assess the ability to work (including partial or total incapacity to do so) and to provide advice and support to enable injured construction workers to return to work. We believe in the benefits of working to recover from injury and supporting the worker to do so.

We look forward to working with Physiotherapists and the construction industry to develop better ways of returning workers to health as soon as possible and helping make work part of their recovery.

We wish you every success in your advocacy efforts on this issue.

Yours sincerely



Chris Alderson  
CEO

Thursday 14 August 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

**RE: Scope of Practice – Work Capacity**

The Health and Safety Association New Zealand (HASANZ) was established in 2014 in response to a recommendation from the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety, which highlighted the need for a more coherent and competent health and safety workforce. HASANZ aims to ultimately reduce harm to workers by supporting collaboration among various health and safety disciplines and raising professional standards across workplace health and safety practices.

HASANZ also plays an important role in supporting our member associations across multiple disciplines, advocating to government and promoting research and investment in initiatives that could lead to better outcomes for workers.

Since HASANZ is dedicated to creating opportunities for our member associations to implement positive changes in health and safety across Aotearoa, we have followed with interest the efforts of the Occupational Health Special Interest Group for Physiotherapy New Zealand to have Section 102 of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001 amended to include physiotherapists as authorised professionals responsible for assessing and certifying eligibility for compensation.

Physiotherapists are vital in the healthcare system, especially in the rehabilitation and management of musculoskeletal injuries. Their expertise in diagnosing and managing physical impairments and disabilities makes them well-qualified to assess patients' functional abilities and determine their capacity to work.

It falls within a physiotherapist's scope of practice to issue work capacity certificates for illness and non-work-related injuries. Extending this authority to ACC claims related to accidents could potentially reduce delays and costs for injured New Zealanders.

HASANZ supports recognising physiotherapists' advanced training and expertise, understanding the potential benefits of quicker access to care, improved recovery outcomes, and more efficient use of health resources. Therefore, we strongly encourage serious consideration of including physiotherapists in the amendments to Section 102 of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001 to authorise them to assess and certify eligibility for compensation.

Yours faithfully,





August 17th 2025

Simon Hoar  
CEO  
Physiotherapy New Zealand  
PO Box 403  
Wellington 6140

**Re: Support for Amendment to Section 102 of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Act 2001**

Kia ora Simon,

I am writing to offer my strong support for Physiotherapy New Zealand's advocacy to amend Section 102 of the ACC Act 2001 to include physiotherapists as authorised professionals to assess and certify eligibility for compensation.

This proposed amendment holds particular significance for rural and remote communities across Aotearoa, where access to healthcare faces unique and persistent challenges.

**Enhanced Access in Underserved Communities**

Rural and remote areas consistently experience significant barriers to accessing primary care, with many communities having limited or intermittent GP services. The current requirement for only GPs and Nurse Practitioners to certify ACC eligibility creates substantial delays for rural patients, who often face long waiting times or considerable travel distances to access these services. Including physiotherapists in Section 102 would provide rural communities with additional accessible pathways to certification, reducing travel burdens and wait times for injured whānau.

**Supporting High-Risk Populations**

Rural communities have disproportionately high rates of physical labour-intensive occupations; farming, forestry, fishing, and construction for example, where musculoskeletal injuries are common and rehabilitation delays can have devastating impacts on both individuals and whānau wellbeing. The ability for physiotherapists to certify eligibility would ensure faster access to appropriate rehabilitation support, enabling earlier return to mahi and reducing the economic impact of prolonged injury on rural households.

**Leveraging Existing Rural Healthcare Networks**

Many rural areas already have established physiotherapy services through visiting practitioners or local clinics, as well as growing numbers of physiotherapists working in primary care teams. Enabling these existing providers to certify ACC eligibility would maximise the utility of current rural health resources without requiring additional infrastructure investment. This aligns with the principle of rural generalism, where healthcare professionals work across broader scopes of practice to meet community needs efficiently.

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### Reducing System Pressure

Given the ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining GPs in rural areas, enabling physiotherapists to undertake ACC certification would reduce pressure on already stretched rural primary care services. This would allow GPs to focus on other critical health needs while ensuring injured patients receive timely, appropriate assessment and certification.

The Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand has confirmed that work capacity assessment falls within the physiotherapy scope of practice. Combined with physiotherapists' specialised expertise in musculoskeletal assessment and rehabilitation, this amendment represents a practical and evidence-based solution to improving access to care for rural communities.

I fully endorse this proposal as a valuable step towards more equitable healthcare access for rural and remote communities across Aotearoa. Please feel free to share this letter of support with relevant decision-makers and stakeholders as part of your advocacy efforts.

Ngā mihi,

Dr Jane George DHSc, CHE, FACHSM  
Rural Health Workforce Strategist

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*This letter supports the principle of manaakitanga; caring for our rural communities through improved access to appropriate, timely healthcare services.*

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