



Mahi Mihinare

**Anglican Action**

justice through service

---

28 January 2021

## Submission on:

# Holidays (Increasing Sick Leave) Amendment Bill

Anglican Action wishes to speak to this submission. Please contact:

**Robert Moore**

*Social Justice Researcher*

[robert.moore@anglicanaction.org.nz](mailto:robert.moore@anglicanaction.org.nz)

## Anglican Action supports this Bill

In response to the pandemic, in March 2020 we increased our sick leave provision from 5 days to 10 days per annum for all staff and have received strong affirmative feedback for doing so. We would like to invite your attention to our positive experience in this regard, and make this submission from the unique position of being an employer, who of our own accord implemented the very thing this Bill seeks to achieve.

As an employer we have an obligation to ensure that if staff are not well or are awaiting test results, that these staff are not at work potentially exposing others to illness. We believe that increasing sick days from 5 to 10 supports this goal.

We are proud of the way our nation responded to the pandemic - a response which saved many lives and livelihoods. We would like to continue to see the capacity for public health resilience embedded in Aotearoa. This Bill improves this.

## About us

Anglican Action Mahi Mihinare is a faith and Treaty-based social service of over 80 staff, working alongside and advocating for structural solutions to the problems we see daily. We see those who are marginalised and vulnerable, we see addiction and abuse, we see the impact of victimisation and incarceration, we see intergenerational disadvantage, and the struggle of those who are striving to improve their lives and that of their children and whānau but who face enormous barriers on every front. We offer youth mentoring for those involved in the justice system, we provide transitional accommodation and reintegration support for those returning to the community from prison or other institutions, and we provide residential support for mothers and their babies.

## Our experience

Our staff must be well, and our duty of care as an employer compelled us to increase our sick leave provision to ensure that staff feel able to take appropriate time off work when experiencing symptoms of, or were potentially exposed to, COVID19.

Our work, like many other frontline workplaces, supporting high risk and vulnerable populations, is a 24 hour, 365 day operation. Contractual requirements, and our standard of care, mandates that for some of our services, we have staff onsite 24/7. For the wellbeing of the people we support the nature of providing often intense social services and mentoring kanohi ki te kanohi, means we need staff physically present, and these staff need to be well. Much of our work cannot be delivered remotely. This Bill incentivises staff to proactively follow public health guidelines and contribute to wider wellbeing of themselves, their families, our residents, and the wider Waikato community.

Staff have reported that this move recognises the role of being a parent or caregiver and the need to take time off work to care for children or dependents, contributing to community wellbeing, reducing the potential for further community spread by keeping children away from daycare or school when ill or potentially exposed and requiring time to isolate.

We also see that the Bill increases staff retention and decreases the time and financial costs of recruitment, orientation, training, certifications, equipment costs, and the covering of any shortfall between staff leaving and new staff being in place.