

## **CBM New Zealand and Te Marae Ora Formalise Landmark Partnership for Inclusive Eye Health and Rehabilitation**

**Auckland, New Zealand | 1 July 2026**

Christian Blind Mission International (New Zealand) (CBM NZ) and Te Marae Ora – Ministry of Health, Cook Islands, have today signed a landmark Health Collaboration Agreement to strengthen inclusive eye health and rehabilitation services across the Cook Islands. Signed in Auckland by Dr Murray Sheard and Mr Bob Williams, the agreement marks an important milestone in a shared commitment to improving equitable access to quality health services.

The agreement provides the framework for collaboration between Te Marae Ora, CBM New Zealand and OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation to establish a dedicated Refractive Error Vision Centre at Rarotonga Hospital while strengthening rehabilitation services, disability inclusion, workforce capacity and health system preparedness.

Today's signing follows the successful joint scoping mission undertaken in June by Te Marae Ora, CBM New Zealand, OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation. During the mission, the Minister of Health Hon. Vainetutai Rose Toki Brown and partners confirmed a shared vision for expanding accessible eye health services, strengthening rehabilitation and improving support for people with disabilities. The Cook Islands Government committed dedicated clinical space, workforce and long-term operational support for the new Vision Centre. Today's agreement formally translates that shared vision into action.

Under the partnership, the organisations will work together to improve access to assistive technology, strengthen referral pathways, build the capacity of local health professionals and promote disability-inclusive service delivery. These investments will contribute to a stronger, more resilient and inclusive health system for all Cook Islanders.



*Dr Murray Sheard (Chief Executive Officer, CBM New Zealand) and Mr Bob Williams (Secretary of Health, Te Marae Ora – Ministry of Health, Cook Islands) following the signing of the Health Collaboration Agreement in Auckland.*

#### Leadership reflections

“This agreement reflects our shared commitment to ensuring that everyone, including people with disabilities, has access to quality health services. We are honoured to partner with Te Marae Ora in strengthening local leadership, building sustainable services and improving opportunities for Cook Islands communities to access quality eye health and rehabilitation care close to home.”

— Dr Murray Sheard, Chief Executive Officer, CBM New Zealand

“This agreement reflects our shared vision of strengthening the Cook Islands health system through partnership, innovation and long-term investment. Together we are building services that will benefit our communities today and for future generations.”

— Mr Bob Williams, Secretary of Health, Te Marae Ora

#### About the partnership

The collaboration reflects the shared leadership and commitment of Te Marae Ora, Christian Blind Mission (New Zealand), OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation and organisations representing persons with disabilities. Together, the partners are investing in sustainable, inclusive health services that strengthen resilience and improve the wellbeing of Cook Islands communities.

**ENDS**