

Draft Record of the notes from the Muslim Community Reference Group Hui 1 with the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, held at Ngā Hau E Wha Marae on 25 July 2019

Date and time of meeting	25 July 2019
Location	Ngā Hau e Wha National Marae, Christchurch

The purpose of these notes is to provide a record of the meeting, to provide background for those who were unable to attend, and to capture our undertakings from the day.

Participants

Chris Mene, an independent facilitator from Christchurch, was responsible for facilitating the process for the day.

Muslim Community Reference Group members attending were:

Abdullah Drury	Guled Mire	Regina Rasheed
Akram Kawa	Haris Murtaza	Rehanna Ali
Aliya Denziesen	Ikhlāq Kashkari	Sahra Ahmed
Altamash Askari	Jasim Adam	Shadia Amin
Anjum Rahman	Javed Dadabhai	Shaggaf Khan
Bariz Shah	Kalim Ullah Khan	Shahed Abu Jwaied
Dr Anwar Ghani	Masooma Mehdi	Shaymaa Arif
Dr Mohammed Rizwan	Melissa Kuila Lama	Sheikh Mohammad Amir
Dr Zainab Radhi	Mohamed Diab	Sondos Qur'aan
Fatimah Ali	Noeleen van de Lisdonk	Soraiya Daud
Firoz Patel	Rafik Patel	Tyrone Smith
		Zulfiqar Butt

Apologies were received from:
Abdur Razaq Khan.

The Royal Commission attendees were:

- Sir William Young, Commissioner, and Chair of the Royal Commission
- Jacqui Caine, Commissioner, and Member of the Royal Commission
- Benesia Smith, Executive Director of the Royal Commission
- Secretariat staff

Other attendees:

Māori Wardens also provided security for the site.

Process and outcomes from the day

The mana whenua (host people) welcomed the manuhiri (visitors) onto the marae at 10:00am. Alamein Connell was the kaikaranga (caller) for the mana whenua (host people) and Gaye Stanley was the kaikaranga (caller) for the manuhiri (visitors).

Henare Edwards spoke for the mana whenua (host people) and Tyrone Smith for the manuhiri (visitors). We then greeted Henare and Alamein with hongis (press noses) and harirū (handshakes). We then all moved into morning tea in the whare kai (food hall).

As members of the Reference Group were meeting for the first time, they asked to meet by themselves, prior to the independently facilitated agenda starting. They met for approximately an hour where they discussed:

- their concerns about the Royal Commission process; and
- their success factors for the Royal Commission and the Muslim Community Reference Group.

The Muslim Community Reference Group then asked the Royal Commission and the independent facilitator into the hui.

Sir William and Jacqui in their introductions, commenced by saying that at the heart of their thinking are the 51 shohada – who died as a result of the events of 15 March. They also acknowledged those who were wounded, the Muslim communities of New Zealand and New Zealanders who are deeply hurting, and that there are many who remain deeply distressed by the attack, and that lives will be changed forever due to grief, trauma and disruption.

Sir William said he sees the Muslim Community Reference Group as a way for the Royal Commission to connect with the Muslim communities of New Zealand, noting that they would also spend time connecting with other Muslim people and organisations whose leaders, representatives and members may or may not be on the reference group.

Sir William noted that the Royal Commission wants to meet with the affected families, the survivors and others affected by the attack. Meetings will be on their terms, when and where suits them and respectful of their privacy.

The Commissioners shared some detail of the nature of the Royal Commission's processes:

- that we are operating under constraints in the Inquiry by respecting and balancing the Inquiry process with the fair trial rights of the accused, the natural justice process, and proper handling of classified material;
- have been very busy hiring the full team of secretariat staff, and are now operating with a full complement of Community Engagement professionals which means now is the right time to shift gear and to hear from the Muslim Community Reference Group;
- are setting up a Muslim communities' engagement process;
- want to hear Muslim communities' perspectives, experiences, concerns, aspirations;
- is completely independent of government and is not the Department of Internal Affairs;
- operates under the Inquiries Act legislation and a statutory instrument under that Act (the Royal Commission Terms of Reference); and
- are thinking about how we will run this inquiry.

Jacqui described the Royal Commission's work as a journey of discovery. A journey to find the facts, a journey that will involve many conversations, with many people and organisations. She noted that the Commission is interpreting the Terms of the Reference in a broad way.

Jacqui then outlined that the Commission's purpose is to find:

- what relevant State Sector agencies knew about the attacker;
- what, if anything they did with that information;
- whether there was anything else they should have done; and

- what should be done to avoid something similar in the future.

She also detailed that while we are investigating the attack that happened on 15 March, we are asking a broad range of questions, including:

- what should government do to stop another terrorist attack in NZ?
- what sort of white supremacist or extremist actions have you seen or experienced? Has this changed over time?
- what worries you most about the safety and security of your community?
- how could government make you feel safer?
- what should government do to promote both acceptance and inclusion of Muslim communities, and you feeling part of New Zealand society?
- what would a trusting relationship with government look like?

Jacqui concluded that the Royal Commission is seeking to bring the Muslim communities' questions and thoughts into the work of the inquiry. She finished by noting that the Royal Commission wants Muslim voices in our work and strongly represented in our report.

The whakawhanaungatanga / introductions continued with all present introducing themselves to the whole group. Two thirds of the group introduced themselves before we broke for lunch. Lunch and Zhuhr Salat occurred from 12:35 to 1:15. The meeting recommenced at 1:15 with the whakawhanaungatanga / introductions for the remaining third of attendees.

Ikhlaq Kashkari then reported back on behalf of the Muslim Community Reference Group regarding the issues they raised, the questions they had and the set of draft success factors they identified for the Royal Commission and the Muslim Community Reference Group.

There was then a loosely facilitated questions and answers session for the remaining 45 minutes of the meeting. Questions were raised by many participants and reflected a range of perspectives.

Some members left the meeting early to catch flights. The meeting formally closed at 3.30pm.

Next Steps Action point	What	Who responsible for action	Timeframe
1.	The Royal Commission committed to answering the questions raised, in tranches of information over the following weeks.	Royal Commission	by 2 September 2019
2.	Resolved that the next meeting of 8 August would be rescheduled due to the religious observances of the Islamic month of Dhul Hijjah, including the Hajj pilgrimage, and the Eid al-Adha celebration. A new date will be set as soon as possible.	Royal Commission	by 13 August 2019
3.	Agreed for further meetings that dates be set so that participants can book them into their schedules well in advance	Royal Commission	by 13 August 2019