

Muslim Community Reference Group Hui 4

Notes of meeting

Date and time of meeting	7 November 2019
Location	Ngā Hau e Wha National Marae, Christchurch
Attendees	Muslim Community Reference Group members Commissioners Sir William Young and Jacqui Caine Benesia Smith, Executive Director Chris Mene, Facilitator Secretariat staff
Apologies	Dr Zulfiqar Butt, Haris Murtaza, Kalim Ullah, Shahed Abu Jwaied, Ikhlāq Kashkari, Dr Anwar Ghani Sheikh Mohammad Amir and Sondos Qur'an attended Sessions 1, 2 and 4 (note that Session 3 was held after Session 5).

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 actions arising from the hui.

Session 1: Opening Remarks

Dr Maysoon Salama performed a du'a.

Sir William Young opened the hui with reflections on some of the things the Royal Commission has been told about State sector agencies during engagements and interviews to date.

Jacqui Caine provided an update on what the Royal Commission has heard about community experiences with State sector agencies.

Chris Mene invited Reference Group members to reflect on Sir William's and Jacqui's opening remarks in small groups at the tables and make comments or ask questions.

Session 2: Further discussion on Royal Commission process

Benesia Smith presented an update on the Royal Commission's process. Benesia addressed some of the questions raised by Reference Group members during Hui 3. Key points included:

- All sources of information the Royal Commission is obtaining (including from community engagement, submissions, interviews, evidence under oath, information from State sector agencies, etc.) are weighted the same. No one source of information is weighted above others.
- The Reference Group will have a role in testing the Royal Commission's thinking as it develops draft findings and recommendations. In addition, the Reference Group will not be given a draft of the report before it is finalised.
- The Royal Commission will not be publicly releasing submissions – they will all be kept confidential (unless submitters choose to release their own submissions).

- Reference Group members cannot attend the Royal Commission’s interviews with State sector agencies, due to privacy, confidentiality, natural justice and national security considerations.

Session 3 was deferred until after Session 5.

Session 4: Understanding the New Zealand National Security System

The Royal Commission invited Reference Group members to break into small groups at tables and identify what they already know about the National Security System, including which agencies are involved, what its objectives are, who sets its agenda, how it undertakes its role, etc.

Benesia Smith then provided an introductory presentation on the New Zealand National Security System. Key points included:

- There is no overarching legislation that defines what national security means, or what the objectives of the National Security System are.
- New Zealand has an “all hazards, all risks” approach to national security. This includes earthquakes, tsunamis, biosecurity, oil spills, infrastructure failure, etc. Terrorism is only one of many potential risks.
- The National Security System is designed to deal with the four “R’s”:
 - Reduction – eliminating or reducing the likelihood of risk and reducing the magnitude of impact
 - Readiness – developing systems and capabilities before an event happens
 - Response – taking action immediately before, during or directly after an event, and
 - Recovery – using coordinated efforts and process to bring about immediate, medium-term and long-term recovery.
- There are seven key objectives that underpin the National Security System:
 - Ensuring public safety
 - Preserving sovereignty and territorial integrity
 - Protecting lines of communication
 - Strengthening internal order to promote security
 - Sustaining economic prosperity
 - Monitoring democratic institutions and national values
 - Protecting the natural environment.
- The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is responsible for coordinating the National Security System. Each type of hazard/risk (such as terrorism, earthquake, oil spill) has a government agency identified as the lead agency responsible. Other agencies will support the lead agency as required. The national security priorities have been published in the DPMC Annual Report – see <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/annual-report-2019>.

- The National Security Handbook outlines that the New Zealand Police are the identified lead agency responsible for terrorism.
- A Combined Threat Assessment Group sets the national terrorism threat level, which relates to the likelihood of an attack occurring. As announced by the Prime Minister, the current threat level is “medium”. Prior to 15 March 2019, the threat level was assessed as “low”. The threat level was assessed as “high” between 15 March and 17 April 2019.

Midday prayer and lunch

The group broke for Zuhr Salat (midday prayer) and moved into the whare kai (food hall) for lunch.

Session 5: Reference Group members sharing their experiences with State sector agencies

The Royal Commission invited Reference Group members to break into small groups to provide information on their (and their communities’) experiences with State sector agencies involved in the National Security System.

Session 3: Community Engagement Progress

The Royal Commission provided an update on community engagement. This included clarifying the next steps for Reference Group Member led engagement (as identified at the previous hui).

Next hui and closing comments

The next hui will be held on 5 December 2019.

The Muslim Community Reference Group Terms of Reference, the notes from Hui 2 and the notes from Hui 3 were confirmed.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm with afternoon tea.