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COVID-19 Inquiry Newsletter: Issue 20

2 JULY 2025

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



May and June have marked a significant period of work for the Inquiry.

Throughout June, the Inquiry has travelled across Aotearoa New Zealand. We have visited

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Te Tai Tokerau Northland, Ōtautahi Christchurch, and Kirikiriroa Hamilton and heard from a range of organisations and individuals about the effects of the pandemic and the Government's response to it on health, education, business, and society.

Thank you to everyone who gave us their time and insights throughout our travels. It is a privilege to hear the views of so many different groups throughout the country. The experiences and perspectives you have shared with us will make a significant contribution to our work at the Inquiry.

The Inquiry has also nearly completed the analysis of all of the 31,000 public submissions received earlier in 2025. Thank you again to everyone who shared their experiences with us - we very much value your perspectives.

The Inquiry has also been preparing for our first public hearings, which begin next week on Monday 7 July. This first session of hearings will see the Inquiry hear from organisations and individuals about their experiences of the pandemic and the Government's response to it around Aotearoa New Zealand.

These hearings will be livestreamed through the Inquiry website to ensure that they're available for anyone who would like to watch. We think it's important that members of the public are able to witness the hearings and we hope that by doing so, people will feel more informed about the work of the Inquiry and also have greater understanding, and confidence, in the Inquiry's findings and recommendations.

We look forward to learning more about the experiences of New Zealanders throughout our first session of hearings. Thank you to those

who will be sharing their time and expertise with us next week.

Ngā mihi nui,



Grant Illingworth KC
Chair – Phase Two

PUBLIC HEARINGS



The Inquiry's public hearings will begin next week.

The first session of public hearings will take place between 7 July 2025 and 11 July 2025 in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. The Inquiry will hear evidence from individuals and organisations around Aotearoa New Zealand about experiences and perspectives of the pandemic and the Government's response to it. The Inquiry will also hear from a range of experts, including on topics such as vaccines, and how they work, for example.

The second session of public hearings will take place from 20 August 2025 to 27 August 2025 in Pōneke Wellington. The Inquiry will hear from key decision makers who led and informed the

Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of the hearings is to gather evidence from those who led Aotearoa New Zealand's pandemic response and from a wide range of groups and individuals about their experiences of the pandemic, and the Government's response to it.

The hearings will also give the public insight into the work of the Inquiry and showcase the range of perspectives being heard in the course of the Inquiry's work, and are intended to help people will feel more informed about the work of the Inquiry and also have greater understanding, and confidence, in the Inquiry's findings and recommendations.

The hearings will focus on Government decisions relating to lockdowns, vaccine mandates, and vaccine safety. These have been identified as issues of particular focus for the public, as well as areas where further evidence gathering is required.

The hearings are one of the many methods the Inquiry is using to gather information. The Inquiry has also held interviews with key decision makers, meetings with organisations and individuals to gather a wide range of pandemic experiences, and gathered extensive documentation on the pandemic response, as well as hearing from 31,000 people through public submissions.

The hearings will be livestreamed through the Inquiry's website.

[Visit the Inquiry's website](#) to learn more about the hearings and view the livestream from next week.

MINUTE 3



The Inquiry has released a new Minute: Phase Two – Minute 3.

This minute records the Inquiry's decision to hold two public hearings as part of the Inquiry, and the reasons for that decision.

The Minute lays out the purpose of the hearings and the legal basis for holding these hearings.

[Read Minute 3 on the Inquiry website.](#)

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENTS



Throughout June, the Inquiry has visited a number of cities around Aotearoa New Zealand to hear from individuals and organisations about their pandemic experiences.

In early June, the Inquiry visited Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. While in Auckland, the

Inquiry heard from local councils, businesses, health providers – including Māori and Pasifika health providers, disabled community representatives, Pasifika community leaders, ethnic community representatives, and advocacy groups.

Following our visit to Auckland, the Inquiry travelled to Te Tai Tokerau Northland. In Northland, the Inquiry met with business representatives, councils, youth representatives, education providers, and Māori health and social service providers.

In the following week, the Inquiry visited Ōtautahi Christchurch and Kirikiriroa Hamilton. While there, the Inquiry heard from councils, businesses, and economic bodies, and disabled community representatives.

The purpose of these visits was to hear a broad range of views and experiences. By hearing from people around the country, the Inquiry can better understand the impact of the pandemic and the Government's response to it on Aotearoa New Zealand. Building a comprehensive picture of the COVID-19 pandemic will support the Inquiry in providing recommendations to the Government on how to prepare for future pandemics.

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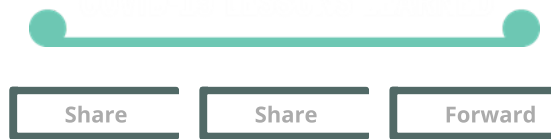
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You can also find updates about the Inquiry on our [website](#).

OUR PURPOSE IS TO
**LEARN FROM AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND'S
EXPERIENCE OF THE PANDEMIC**
TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE



THE NEW ZEALAND ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO COVID-19
LESSONS LEARNED I TE TIRA ĀRAI URUTĀ

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