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COVID-19 Inquiry Newsletter: Issue 25

3 FEBRUARY 2026

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



The work of Phase Two of the Inquiry is nearly complete.

The production of our final report continues at pace, ready to be delivered to the Governor-

General on 26 February 2026. We are currently in the process of making final edits before this date, as well as preparing the report for publication.

Once the report is completed and submitted to the Governor-General, the Government will receive a copy and have the opportunity to read through and review our conclusions. They will then announce when the report will be published and available to the public. The report itself will be published on the Inquiry's website when that date arrives. An update will be sent out through our communications channels to let you know that the report is live.

Over time, we will also have information available in languages other than English (te reo Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Hindi, and Simplified Chinese), as well as in accessible formats (New Zealand Sign Language, Easy Read, Braille, Audio, and Large Print).

In preparation for the publication of our report, we have continued providing information below on our terms of reference and how those terms of reference will be reflected in the final report. In our final part of this series, we have covered specific areas that will not be included in the Inquiry's report.

We are also working towards publishing our final Minute. This will set out which kinds of information collected by the Inquiry may be accessible for members of the public to access from Archives New Zealand after the Inquiry concludes. We expect this to be published on our website in the coming weeks and will let you know when it is available.

We look forward to completing our report and sharing it with you all.

Ngā mihi nui,



Grant Illingworth KC

Chair – Phase Two

THE INQUIRY'S TERMS OF REFERENCE - LIMITS TO THE INQUIRY'S SCOPE



All Royal Commissions of Inquiry are governed by a terms of reference.

All Royal Commissions of Inquiry are governed by a terms of reference. The terms of reference sets out important details about the Inquiry, such as who the Commissioners are, what matter the Inquiry has been asked to look into, and what areas specifically the Inquiry should and should not make findings on as part of its work.

As the COVID-19 Inquiry enters its final stages and prepares to submit our report, we wanted to take our readers through the terms of reference to share more about what we have been working on and what topics will be covered – and what topics won't be covered – in our final report.

You can view the full terms of reference on the [New Zealand Legislation website](#).

Limits to the Inquiry's scope

The terms of reference outline certain areas or topics that the Inquiry cannot look at. The reason for this is usually that these areas or topics are covered by other organisations, or that a Royal Commission of Inquiry would not have access to the funding or time to fully investigate these topics.

When something is out of scope, it means the Inquiry cannot make a finding about this topic and that Inquiry resources should not be used to gather evidence on this topic. It can still be mentioned or described in the Inquiry's final report to provide context, but the Inquiry cannot make a judgement about this particular area.

The topics out of scope for the COVID-19 Inquiry are:

- Particular clinical decisions made by clinicians or public health authorities during the pandemic.
- How and when COVID-19 response measures were applied in individual cases.
- The operation of the general regulatory and approval system for vaccines other than the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The epidemiology of the COVID-19 virus.
- The recent reforms to New Zealand's health system.
- The judgements/decisions of the Ombudsman, the Privacy Commissioner, or the Independent Policy Conduct Authority.
- The operations of private businesses unless their work relates to the areas of the COVID-19 response being investigated by the Inquiry.
- Decisions made by the Reserve Bank's independent monetary policy committee.

- Adaptations of court or parliamentary proceedings during the pandemic.
- The conduct of the general election during the pandemic.

The Inquiry also cannot determine the civil, criminal, or disciplinary liability of any person. This means that the Inquiry cannot act like a court and determine and enforce legal consequences. The Inquiry can make recommendations for further action on behalf of other organisations and authorities as long as those recommendations are in line with the terms of reference.

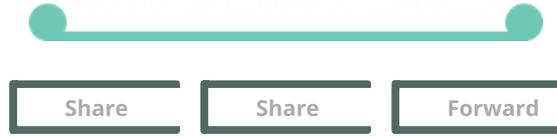
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As well as this pānui, you can also receive updates about the Inquiry on:

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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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