



COVID-19 Inquiry Pānui

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A word from our Chair, Professor Tony Blakely



Kia ora koutou,

Our engagement programme continues to ramp up as we seek insights, evidence and reflections from across Aotearoa. In recent weeks we have met with organisations and representatives from the health, education and emergency response sectors, as well as the

business and tourism sectors. We have also met with the Prime Minister, Ministers, government officials, and with a wide range of Members of Parliament, all of whom played a key role in Aotearoa's pandemic response. Gathering the health perspective, has also been a focus, including meeting with University of Otago researchers Professor Michael Baker, Professor Nick Wilson, and Associate Professor Amanda Kvalsvig, and separately, visiting with the Auckland Regional Public Health Service.

September also saw us undertaking a further trip to Tāmaki Makaurau to meet with a range of Māori organisations, community and faith-based leaders, and key businesses including representatives from Auckland Airport and Foodstuffs. You can see some highlights of the visit in [the video](#) below, and check out a complete list of our recent engagements [here](#).

We are very grateful to those who have prioritised making the time to meet with the Inquiry, and for their openness as we seek to understand what shaped Aotearoa New Zealand's response to COVID-19, and to gather lessons learned. It is also important to acknowledge that for many, these conversations are not easy ones. While the pandemic impacted us all, not everyone experienced it equally. A focus for us is to better understand those experiences – and the role that many in the community played in our collective response – to ensure that we can be as prepared as possible for a future pandemic.

I also want to thank both the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and Auckland Council in particular for their assistance and support in connecting us with key members of the Auckland community during this recent visit. Their efforts were greatly appreciated and led to insightful engagements.

Of course, we expect to hear more about people's experiences when we seek wider public input from November. Ahead of that, we are

partnering with Auckland Council to undertake some research via their [People's Panel](#). We have asked Aucklanders questions that will help us to better understand how they would like to engage with us, and to get some early indication about the areas of the response they're likely to want to feedback on. This is especially important for us given Auckland's experience was different from many other parts of the country.

Finally, today we published revised guidelines for those meeting with the Inquiry. You can read more about what has changed below, or more generally, find updates to our guidelines and procedures on the [How we work](#) section of our website.

Heoi ano ra,



Professor Tony Blakely

Royal Commission Chair

Publishing a record of our engagements

The Royal Commission recently published a [record of engagements](#) we've held with key individuals, organisations, and communities on our website.

This list will be updated monthly to accompany the round up and highlights we feature in this newsletter, and on our website.

Who we talk with, and what we ask, is informed by what we have learnt through our review and the analysis of publicly available information about the pandemic.

The names of individuals and organisations are published in accordance with “Minute 2: Inquiry meeting procedure and information gathering.” Note that the record does not include any follow-up meetings the Commission has held or plans to hold.

Sharing perspectives on the pandemic

As part of our September engagements we have captured some individual perspectives [on video](#).

Outside of our formal meetings, we asked a representative group from the people we have met with a few questions such as, ‘what was your experience of the pandemic?’, and ‘what would you potentially like to see done differently in the future?’

Check out this video to hear what they wanted to share.



A snapshot of who we've been meeting with



During our most recent visit to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the Royal Commission met with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust chair Marama Royal, and senior staff including Whai Māia chief executive Tom Irvine and Te Ara Gillman Toi Ora General Manager, who shared their experiences and insights from the pandemic (pictured above with Commissioner Hekia Parata, second from left).



Commissioners also met with a round table of Faith Leaders, hearing from communities about the work they did during the COVID-19 response – and what we can learn from their respective experiences. Leaders spoke of the impacts on communities of faith during the pandemic.



Manukau Urban Maori Authority (MUMA) kindly hosted Commissioners and secretariat staff at Ngā Whare Waatea Marae. MUMA played a key role in supporting the wider Auckland community during the pandemic, and the Commission was interested to learn more about this work, and any lessons that could be identified.



Jane McEntee, from Te Whatu Ora's Northern Region National Public Health Service, talks to Inquiry Chair Professor Tony Blakely about the service's pandemic role and response.



Commissioners also enjoyed the opportunity to hear from the Auckland Council Advisory Panel Chairs, who presented a diverse range of views from across their communities. The panel included representatives from the Pasifika

community, Rainbow community, Disabled community, Ethnic community, Young people, and Seniors.



The Inquiry met with essential workers from Foodstuffs New Zealand to better understand key aspects of the response, including the management of critical supply chains.

Minute 2 update

Today we re-issued “Minute 2: Inquiry meeting procedure and information gathering.”

The revised Minute 2 further clarifies how engagements are held with the Royal Commission and what is expected of both the attendees and the Commission. Specifically, it clarifies:

- the approach to and meaning of a support person,
- the meaning of “public service agency,”
- that the names of interviewees may be published as part of the Inquiry’s regular public communications.

It also states our intention to begin recording meetings to assist with the Secretariat’s note taking. It is important to note that meetings with the Royal Commission will continue to be private and these recordings will not be shared with the public or published anywhere.

If you are engaging with the Royal Commission in the future, please read the revised Minute 2 on the [“How we will work”](#) page of our website.



Royal Commission COVID-19 Lessons

<https://www.covid19lessons.royalcommission.nz/>

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