



COVID-19 Inquiry Pānui

In this issue:

- An update from our Chair, Professor Blakely
- Launching public submissions and feedback on the terms of reference
- Release of Minute 3
- Engagement update

A word from our Chair, Professor Tony Blakely



Kia ora koutou,

An important part of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into COVID-19's work is to understand what happened to people during the pandemic and why.

For that reason, I'm pleased to let you know that as of today – 8 February 2024 – we've launched a dedicated online submission site – www.covid19inquiry.nz – in order to hear from people about their experiences of the

pandemic. Submissions will be open until 24 March 2024.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected all of us, and New Zealanders – both here and living overseas – were asked to undertake extraordinary actions during this time. We want to hear about the wide range of experiences people had, and their observations of the pandemic, whatever they might be.

And it really is important that we do hear these stories. The unfortunate reality is that there will be another pandemic, and we need to take this opportunity to learn the lessons, both from our own experiences and from those overseas, so that we're as prepared as possible.

As you might recall, it was our intention to seek public input from November last year, but we delayed this due to the likelihood of our terms of reference changing.

The Government announced on Friday 2 February that it is committed to expanding the Inquiry's terms of reference and has asked us to undertake consultation, on its behalf, on a broader, clarified scope for the Inquiry. Feedback on the terms of reference will be gathered alongside our public submissions process, and will be provided to the Department of Internal Affairs. They will then provide advice to the Government ahead of any changes that might be made to the scope of the Inquiry. As a result of this consultation, the Inquiry may be asked to look at additional aspects of the COVID-19 response.

While we're looking at a wide range of COVID-19 related topics, such as mandates and other public health measures, and a variety of social and economic matters, we recognise there are additional topics that people might like us to consider, and likely useful clarifications to make (for example, regarding the scope and depth of inquiry into vaccine effectiveness).

During February and March, we'll be letting people know how they can make a submission on the terms of reference, and how they can share their story through a public information campaign that will get underway from Sunday 11 February. While changes to our terms of reference will likely alter how we analyse what we've been told, everyone should feel free to make submissions on any aspects of the pandemic.

We'll also have a presence at some public events, like community markets and A&P shows, during the consultation period to encourage people to share their experiences.

We really do want to hear from you. Please take the time to share your story with us, and don't assume that your experience was the same as everyone else's – it could very well be different. We've certainly learnt that from the many direct engagements we've undertaken in these past nine months or so. And if you see me at an event in the coming months, or my fellow Commissioner John Whitehead, do come and talk to us. It would be great to hear your reflections and perspective.

Heoi ano ra,



Professor Tony Blakely

Royal Commission Chair

Share your story: public submissions open



You can share your COVID-19 story with the Royal Commission and provide feedback on our terms of reference at www.covid19inquiry.nz.

By sharing your COVID-19 story, you can contribute to Inquiry's work to help Aotearoa New Zealand prepare for future pandemics.

By providing feedback on the terms of reference, you can tell the Government if you think the Inquiry's terms of reference should be broadened.

You can take part in both consultations, or just one.

Submission forms and information about both consultations are available in English, New Zealand Sign Language, te reo Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Hindi, and Chinese. There is also accessible information about the process available in New Zealand Sign Language, Braille, Audio, Easy Read, and Large Print. Please note that some resources may not yet be available.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Release of Minute 3

In early December 2023, we published "[Minute 3: Inquiry procedures for public and other submissions](#)" on our website.

Minute 3 focuses on the procedures for our early and public submission processes; specifically, it outlines how we will treat any information that we receive through these

forums. Please note that the consultation on the terms of reference is not subject to Minutes released by the Inquiry.

Key points to note are:

- All information we receive, including submissions, will be private and confidential under our interim non-publication orders (more information on this is outlined in [“Minute 1: Interim non-publication orders”](#)).
- Any personal information provided to us through our public submissions process will be kept confidential, even after the interim non-publication order is lifted.
- Anyone who provides a submission through our public submissions process can request that their submission remain permanently confidential. If this request is made, it will be granted.
- If you and/or your organisation provided a written submission as part of our early submissions process, and would like to have areas of your submission be made permanently confidential, please let us know. If this request is approved, a redacted version of your submission will be transferred to Archives New Zealand at the end of the Inquiry (along with all other evidence).
- Once we have provided our report to the Governor-General, you will be able to publish your submission (provided it is not covered by a permanent non-publication order).

As we receive and analyse submissions, we may share themes and anonymised quotes on our website, social media platforms, and in our newsletter.

Minute 3 complements our Minute 1 and Minute 2, and can be found in the [Procedural Minutes](#) section of our [website](#).

Commission continues nation-wide engagements

The Royal Commission continued to engage with organisations and individuals across the country throughout December 2023.

This included forums with food suppliers, sexual and family violence support organisations, groups representing older people, the Rainbow community, and the construction sector. The Royal Commission also continued to meet with representatives from the health and education sectors, including Hato Hone St John, Wellington Free Ambulance, and the New Zealand Nurses Organisation.

Engagements across Aotearoa New Zealand will continue throughout the first quarter of 2024. You can view the [full record of Inquiry engagements](#) on our website.



Over the past year, the Royal Commission of Inquiry has spoken to organisations and individuals across Aotearoa New Zealand. Take a look at the people we've spoken with in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland so far in the video above.



Royal Commission COVID-19 Lessons

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

[Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)