Te Tira Ārai Urutā – the Royal Commission of Inquiry into COVID-19 Lessons Learned

Summaries of engagements held by the Inquiry
July, August and September 2025

These engagement summaries highlight the key points raised by a range of stakeholders to inform the Inquiry's evidence-base.

Fonterra Co-Operative Group Ltd

Representatives from Fonterra told the Inquiry that engaging with the Ministry for Primary Industries was effective as they took a high-trust approach. This was particularly helpful for ensuring their staff had the necessary permissions when they were required to cross regional boundaries for essential work.

Despite significant operational pressures, Fonterra maintained domestic food supply continuity without shortages, which representatives said demonstrated the resilience of essential industries when given appropriate operational flexibility.

As an international organisation, the representatives shared that they had access to global knowledge and practices that were not fully utilised domestically. The Inquiry heard that effective approaches observed overseas could have been adopted earlier as part of Aotearoa New Zealand's pandemic response.

New Zealand Teachers Speaking Out with Science

Representatives from New Zealand Teachers Speaking Out with Science told the Inquiry that relevant research on the COVID-19 virus' transmission was not shared with decision-makers ahead of the education worker vaccine mandate being introduced.

They also discussed how a large number of education workers left their profession as a result of this vaccine mandate, with many not returning to the education sector due to social divisions within the community or their positions within the schools being filled. The representatives suggested that daily COVID-19 testing could have been used as a less restrictive alternative measure to the vaccine mandate.

Adrian Littlewood

A summary of this engagement is not available, as per the Inquiry's engagement protocols.