

Muslim Community Reference Group Hui 5

Notes of meeting

Date and time of meeting	5 December 2019
Location	Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Ave, Christchurch
Attendees	Muslim Community Reference Group members Commissioners Sir William Young and Jacqui Caine Benesia Smith, Executive Director Siân Torrington, Facilitator Secretariat staff
Apologies	Abdur Razzaq, Akram Kawa, Bariz Shah, Dr Anwar Ghani, Sheikh Mohammad Amir, Shahed Abu Jwaied, Soraiya Daud

The purpose of these notes is to provide a record of the meeting, to provide background for those who were unable to attend and to capture actions arising from the hui.

Session 1: Opening Remarks

Dr Maysoon Salama performed a du'a.

Sir William Young opened the hui with reflections on some of the things the Royal Commission has heard during its community engagement to date.

Jacqui Caine provided some insights on what the Royal Commission heard from its recent trip to Canberra to discuss, amongst other things, Australia's counter-terrorism strategy.

Siân Torrington invited the Reference Group members to reflect on Sir William's and Jacqui's opening remarks at their tables and make comments or ask questions.

Session 2: Further discussion on Royal Commission process

Benesia Smith presented an update on the Royal Commission's process and addressed some of the remaining questions raised by Reference Group members during Hui 4. Key points included:

- The positive impact of the Reference Group, including how it has helped the Royal Commission engage more broadly and reflect on what it is hearing through public engagement and interviews;
- Now the government has confirmed the extended deadline for the report of 30 April 2020, the Royal Commission has updated its timeframes for completing key phases of the inquiry process.
- After 30 April 2020, the Royal Commission will be defunct, and the government will determine when and how the report will be publicly released. There are also other factors that will affect the public release of the report, including the trial of the accused.
- The Royal Commission will be making a set of findings and recommendations to the Government based on its terms of reference. However, the Royal Commission's

process does not mean there is a moratorium in place that stops the Government and State sector agencies from reviewing their own work programme and conducting its own processes and agenda prior to receiving the Royal Commission's report.

Session 3: Understanding the New Zealand National Security System Part 2: purpose and function of State sector agencies in the counter-terrorism effort

The Royal Commission gave a presentation about the purpose and function of State sector agencies operating in the New Zealand National Security System, and how they work together. The focus of the presentation was on counter-terrorism. Key topics included:

- The counter-terrorism effort within the New Zealand National Security System aims to protect New Zealanders and support the global effort against terrorism. The government sets the priorities for the National Security System, including priorities for counter-terrorism.
- The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet leads and coordinates the National Security System.
- The Combined Threat Assessment Group is responsible for assessing the terrorism threats to New Zealand and New Zealand's interests. It is an interagency group comprised of relevant State sector agencies. It provides independent assessments to wider State sector agencies of the threat posed by terrorism.
- New Zealand Police leads the operational response to a terrorist incident and investigates and responds to crimes or threats. It also has a strong focus on prevention.
- The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service and Government Communications Security Bureau collect intelligence about terrorism threats. The New Zealand Security Intelligence Services collects information and the Government Communications Security Bureau collects information from electronic communication.
- Key agencies like New Zealand Customs, Immigration New Zealand, New Zealand Defence Force, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade play an important role both domestically and internationally to monitor, implement and report on the counter-terrorism effort.
- Other agencies like the Ministry of Justice, Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand, and the Ministry of Transport support the key agencies.

Midday prayer and lunch

The group broke for Zuhr Salat (midday prayer) and moved into the whare kai (food hall) for lunch.

Session 4: Understanding the National Security System Part 2: The Counter Terrorism system

The Royal Commission's presentation on the New Zealand National Security System continued. The focus shifted to how agencies contribute to the counter-terrorism effort. Key topics included:

- While we have a clear definition for terrorism there is no definition for violent extremism (domestically or internationally).
- The counter-terrorism effort is managed by a few core agencies: The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, the Government Communications Security Bureau, and New Zealand Police. These agencies need to be agile as extremist groups and individuals continue to change how they operate, and they are mobilising to violence faster than ever before.
- Within the counter-terrorism system there is a spectrum of behaviour by individuals or organisations. At different stages of this spectrum, different agencies will be involved. As individuals or organisations move along the spectrum, agencies need to be able to see the indicators of someone who is mobilising to violence to prevent harm.
- Good information and evidence of motive is required to inform the Police about whether an individual or organisation is mobilising to violence.
- Social cohesion is important to the counter-terrorism effort and is also a whole of government responsibility. A socially diverse society that is inclusive of plurality and different ideas will reduce terrorism threats. Social cohesion is an important value.

Session 5: What could be done to improve the way that Government agencies and the Muslim community work together: workshop

The Royal Commission reflected on the key themes from engagement with the Community Reference Group on their and their communities' experiences with State sector agencies.

Next hui and closing comments

The next hui will be held on 13 February 2020.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm with afternoon tea.