

## Muslim Community Reference Group Hui 6

### Notes of meeting

<b>Date and time of meeting</b>	13 February 2020
<b>Location</b>	Ngā hau e whā marae, 250 Pages Road, Christchurch
<b>Attendees</b>	Muslim Community Reference Group members Commissioners Sir William Young and Jacqui Caine Benesia Smith, Executive Director Chris Mene, Facilitator Secretariat staff
<b>Apologies</b>	Dr Mohammed Rizwan, Regina Rasheed, Shahed Abu Jwaied, Abdur Razzaq Khan, Rehanna Ali

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: Update on Royal Commission process and natural justice**

Sheikh Mohammed Amir performed a du'a.

Facilitator, Chris Mene welcomed members to the meeting, reiterating the confidential nature of which the Muslim Community Reference Group meetings are held and the sensitive nature of material to be discussed.

Benesia Smith presented an update on the process to date, noting that since early November the Royal Commission had been involved in over 100 meetings or evidentiary interviews including with affected families and survivors, state sector agencies and communities. There are several meetings still to be held by MCRG members and some further meetings that the Royal Commission is engaged with. Benesia noted that every hui held impacts on the Royal Commission's thinking.

Benesia discussed the natural justice process and expressed her disappointment in the way this was reported by the media and the effect this has had on a lot of people, particularly affected families and survivors.

Benesia reiterated that if the Royal Commission makes any adverse (negative) findings about any person or organisation, by law it must make them aware of it and give them an opportunity to respond. That could mean we provide a short summary of what we say about them, and they would get an opportunity to respond. Their response may dispute our facts or possibly provide additional factual information if they thought we had missed something or dispute the nature of what our draft adverse finding says. The Royal Commission would consider the feedback provided and then make a final decision on what was to be included in its report.

Sir William reiterated the report is to be presented to the Governor General by 30 April 2020. The trial of the accused will commence on 2 June 2020, and it is likely that parts of the report will not be made public until the trial is concluded.

There was discussion about the natural justice process and its relationship to the trial process, state sector agencies and the submission of the report to the Governor General. Members expressed anxiety and concern on behalf of their communities about the natural justice process and whether the report, once submitted, will remain confidential so as not to interrupt trial proceedings. Some members suggested that the final report should be held by the Royal Commission until post the trial and then presented to the Governor-General.

Benesia acknowledged the members views and thoughts noting that the Order in Council in place requires the report to be delivered by 30 April 2020.

Sir William and Benesia answered questions raised during the presentation.

### **Session 2: Update from Commissioners**

Jacqui provided members with an update on what the Royal Commission has heard focusing on some of the issues that have been raised by those with lived experiences including the ongoing impact of the aftermath of this tragedy. She noted that some of the issues raised do not necessarily fall directly within the terms of reference, so the Commissioners are thinking about how it might best address these issues.

Sir William provided initial brief comments on the proposed shape of the report. He noted the Commissioners intention that the report will clearly outline what we have heard from affected families and survivors, and from communities, including Muslim communities, to ensure that the community voice is appropriately represented. It will identify the key issues raised and provide factual answers.

Chris invited the Reference Group members to reflect on Jacqui's and Sir William's updates at their tables. Sir William, Jacqui and Benesia responded to the questions and comments raised.

### **Session 3: Workshop: Embracing diversity and countering harmful behaviours**

Jacqui discussed the concept of social cohesion and embracing diversity and the challenges that arise.

Reference Group members spent some time discussing these issues and developing potential solutions.

Chris Mene thanked members for their honest reflection.

### **Midday prayer and lunch**

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

### **Session 4: Workshop: Community Voices and the Reference group in the report**

Benesia discussed how the Royal Commission intended to capture the community voice in the report and sought feedback from members.

**Next hui and closing comments.**

The next hui will be held on 5 March 2020 at Ngā Hau e Whā.

The meeting closed at 4.00pm with afternoon tea.

Sheikh Amir performed the closing Du'a.