



He Whenua Taurikura

New Zealand's Hui on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

SCENARIO WALK- THROUGH EXERCISE SUMMARY

15–16 June 2021

Christchurch Town Hall

Ōtautahi, Christchurch

Hui Background

He Whenua Taurikura 2021 was New Zealand's first hui on countering terrorism and violent extremism.

The name 'He Whenua Taurikura' means 'a country at peace'. The name was presented to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission). We are grateful to the Commission for this name, which encapsulates the aim of the hui.

He Whenua Taurikura responds to Recommendation 16 of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjids: *that the Government... host an annual hui, to bring together relevant central and local government agencies, communities, civil society, the private sector and researchers to create opportunities to build relationships and share understanding of countering violent extremism and terrorism.*

The goals of the hui were to promote public conversation, understanding and research on radicalisation; look at how to challenge hate-motivated extremist ideologies; and cover priorities to address New Zealand's terrorism and violent extremism issues.

Over 340 people attended He Whenua Taurikura 2021 in person. Approximately one third of attendees were from academia, one third were from communities and civil society, and one third were representatives of central and local government. We thank all of those who took the time to attend the hui, and contribute their expertise and lived experiences, with the aim of contributing to a country at peace.

A welcome reception was held for all attendees on 14 June, with a mihi whakatau led by Ngāi Tūāhuriri (Ngāi Tahu) and words of welcome from the Honourable Lianne Dalziel, Mayor of Christchurch, and Professor Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canterbury. This was followed by the two full days of the hui sessions on 15 and 16 June.

Videos of the sessions were made publicly available live and after the event for those who were unable to attend.

DPMC was the overall lead for the hui, supported by the Visits and Ceremonial Office (VCO) of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) as the delivery lead.

He Whenua Taurikura will be an annual hui, to be held in future years at a variety of venues across Aotearoa New Zealand.

This exercise summary has been produced by DPMC based on notes taken during the sessions. This record of the session is not intended to fully capture all discussions and statements made by participants.

All statements reflect discussions during the exercise or themes that arose from these, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the New Zealand Government or any other organisation.



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Scenario Walk-Through Exercise

For the afternoon of the second day of the He Whenua Taurikura hui, on 16 June 2021, participants were able to select between two workshops:

- The first was a scenario-based walk-through exercise on violent extremism in New Zealand and actions that sit with different parties.
- The second was a session on the objectives, operating model, and priorities for the National Centre of Excellence for preventing and countering violent extremism.

This document provides a summary of the scenario walk-through exercise.

Exercise Purpose and Background

The purpose of this session was to provide an opportunity for a whole-of-New Zealand society discussion around countering violent extremism domestically. The objectives of the session were to:

- Discuss and consider an appropriate response to an emerging threat;
- Identify and understand the roles of stakeholders, including communities, academia, individuals, and central and local government, who have a role to play in responding to an emerging threat; and
- Explore a whole-of-New Zealand approach to dealing with violent extremism.

Approximately 140 He Whenua Taurikura hui participants attended the exercise. The scenario developed was deliberately fictitious but realistic enough to encourage full participation. Participants were encouraged to spread out across the room and tables were made up of a variety of community members, government officials, academics, civil society organisation representatives and others. The session drew on the Māori concept of *ako*, a reciprocal learning relationship recognising knowledge from both educators and learners.

The scenario was based on an international violent extremist belief called *bottler ideology*, which emerged in New Zealand with a young person on the pathway to radicalisation. The scenario progressed through three stages, with a set of questions posed at each stage:

- What are the concerns for New Zealand?
- What should be done?
- Who has a role to play?
- What are the challenges?

At each stage, participants had the opportunity to discuss the situation and consider the above four questions. Discussions covered a range of themes, including *collaboration, communication, education, risks and legislative barriers*.



Discussion and Suggestions Provided by Participants

With respect to collaboration, there was a desire for a collective approach to addressing emerging violent extremism threats, with a clear lead. Strong relationships should be established and maintained with communities, academics, local and central government, so as to draw on and support them as necessary. The role of the media and social media was discussed by multiple participants and how these organisations, including tech companies, could best contribute.

Trust was a common sub-theme that emerged in relation to collaboration, both in terms of trust in community leaders and trust in government from communities. Upskilling the public on national security was referenced as a method of building this trust.

Participants urged innovation when thinking about how best to collaborate, suggesting engagement with moderates of the global belief and (in the context of this scenario) with water companies.



With respect to communication, participants expressed the need for credible public reassurance messages to be made, either by the government or another trusted, transparent decision-making body. The COVID-19 communication effort was referenced multiple times as a successful public facing strategy, including the use of influential New Zealanders to spread these messages. The role local government plays in countering harmful narratives was also mentioned, with participants reinforcing how important language is and the value of engaging widely to ensure messages are not unintentionally hurtful. Ensuring the perspectives of Tangata Whenua are heard was also noted as being important, specifically around the significance and sacredness of water in this scenario.

Education was also a theme covered by participants, particularly around the role schools have in educating young people about critical thinking skills and being able to recognise mis- or dis-information. Teaching wellness, including resilience and stress management was also highlighted as important. Crucial to this teaching is the support for teachers and schools/education providers that would need to be developed. Outside curriculum learning, such as mentoring programmes or Outward Bound, were also mentioned.



Some legislative barriers were also discussed, including the tension between free speech and hate speech, sharing information across agencies, managing dis-information and the inability to mass monitor the internet. Interestingly, participants views varied greatly when considering whether there was social licence for government agencies or others to monitor the internet.

There were a number of reoccurring points that did not fit neatly into one of the above themes but were equally important. These included:

- Ensuring a simple mechanism for reporting concerning behaviours or indicators of violent extremism, and building trust and confidence in this. A number of participants compared their past experience using the 105 number with the ease of using Healthline during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Given activity appeared to be escalating offshore, security agencies should be aware of this emerging threat. There needs to be assurance an accurate picture is being built – who has responsibility for this.
- Levers need to be available across the spectrum of the pathway towards radicalisation, both in the prevention and intervention stage.

At the conclusion of the scenario, some participants expressed appreciation at having an opportunity to be involved in such a discussion with a scenario that was intentionally developed to ensure no one part of society was disadvantaged. Other participants thanked their tables for the opportunity to give their perspective. Officials benefited greatly in hearing first-hand experiences from affected community members and from a range of other communities, who were very engaged on these issues and had many insightful contributions.

