

Hon Judith Collins KC



Attorney General
Minister of Defence
Minister for Digitising Government
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology
Minister for Space
Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the
Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques

29 February 2024

Arihia Bennett MNZM
Chair, Kāpuia
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Dear Arihia

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2023 outlining your immediate and ongoing concerns regarding the government response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019.

The terrorist attacks on Al-Nur and Linwood Mosques were immensely traumatic and will leave a lasting impact on New Zealand. I particularly acknowledge the specific impact this has had on our Muslim communities, and ethnic and faith-based communities across New Zealand. This Government is committed to the safety and security of all New Zealanders.

Kāpuia has played a critical role throughout the government's response, I want to thank you for your leadership and the dedication and commitment of all Kāpuia members. I enjoyed meeting you on 28 February and discussing your specific advice in more detail. Here I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate the next steps for the response.

It is my view that the government response to the Royal Commission must enter its next phase. My priority for this work is to finalise decisions on outstanding recommendations as soon as is practical and to provide communities with confidence and certainty.

I have considered the progress so far on responding to the Royal Commission recommendations, the time that has elapsed since the Royal Commission released its report, and the shifting context and new challenges we are faced with, both domestically and internationally.

While the centrally coordinated response phase will conclude when funding ends in June 2024, I want to be clear that this is not about stopping all work related to the response. This approach will allow us to face our current challenges, while ensuring that the important work that had its genesis in the Royal Commission is appropriately embedded into ongoing agency work programmes, independently of a coordination effort. Remaining work, as agreed by Cabinet, will continue to be implemented by the relevant agencies, reporting to their ministers in the usual manner.

Accordingly, I do not intend to renew Kāpuia members' terms after 9 June 2024, when the current terms end. Up to that time I look forward to receiving your advice and input on the response. First, I have asked my officials to consult with Kāpuia on the advice they provide to me on transitioning from the coordinated response.

Second, as discussed, I would like to commission Kāpuia to deliver a final report, shaped around the following questions:

- On the Royal Commission response:
 - What are the features of, or elements of success of, specific initiatives that have been implemented well?
 - Where are there still gaps?
- On Kāpuia:
 - What are the key areas where Kāpuia has impacted/influenced the response of the RCOI report?
 - What are recommendations you would make, should a similar advisory group be established in the future?

It is my expectation that all members will have the opportunity to contribute to the creation of this report.

Issues of interest to Kāpuia

In your letter you raised several outstanding matters of interest, which included leadership and governance arrangements for the national security community, counterterrorism measures, and progress on the government response to the independent review of the Intelligence and Security Act. On the first of these issues, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has made internal organisational changes to improve accountability, which includes separating the national security system governance functions from the assessment and policy functions. However, specific advice to the Government on addressing these recommendations is still forthcoming. I welcome further discussion with you. Likewise, advice on counterterrorism and the Intelligence and Security Act is also forthcoming.

I also thank you for your advice on issues such as the importance of countering discrimination, as well as ensuring community participation in national security and social cohesion initiatives continues. I, along with my colleagues, look forward to upcoming opportunities to engage with community representatives with an interest in the Royal Commission response as well as people who continue to live with the impacts of the March 15 attacks.

Finally, I would like to note that I have decided not to proceed with the Response Outcomes Framework. I am aware this was commissioned by the former Lead Coordination Minister, and that Kāpuia has been extensively involved in its development to date. However, we must consider the current fiscal environment. I understand that there is work underway to monitor issues related to the response, including through the *Te Korowai Whetū the Social Cohesion Framework*, the National Security Board. I feel these are better placed to monitor impacts as the response is embedded into agencies' core business.

Again, I thank you for your contribution to the government response to date. Your efforts have made New Zealand safer. I look forward to working productively with you in the coming months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judith Collins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

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Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques