



Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Inquiry into the Earthquake Commission Proactive Release

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The document below is released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet relating to the Public Inquiry into the Earthquake Commission.

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Terms of Reference for a Community Reference Group, to support the Inquiry into the EQC

Introduction

The Government has established a public inquiry into the Earthquake Commission's (EQC) approach to the land and residential claims management process and the related outcomes for the Canterbury earthquake events.

Dame Silvia Cartwright is leading the Inquiry. She is a former Governor General and High Court judge, and has wide experience with other national and international inquiries.

Dame Silvia wants to hear from as wide a range of people and organisations as possible, to understand what parts of the process and systems in place worked well, what didn't work well, and what improvements could be made to ensure EQC is able to respond effectively and positively in the next event of this nature.

There is strong feeling from some residents in the greater Christchurch community that the voices of individuals and local communities have not been listened to sufficiently in post-earthquake recovery and regeneration responses.

This Inquiry is an opportunity to make sure that all claimants interested parties have the chance to take part in the process and share their views. These views will shape the recommendations for changes and improvements that Dame Silvia Cartwright will make to the Government in mid-2019.

A Community Reference Group of wise advisors, who are knowledgeable about community sentiment and experiences in dealing with EQC, can act as a valuable input to and check of the engagement and communications processes that the Inquiry follow.

Purpose

A Community Reference Group will help make sure the Inquiry process builds in appropriate, accessible and equitable opportunities for anyone who wants to take part in the Inquiry to do so.

The Reference Group will not be a representative group of *all* communities of interest or viewpoints. It will comprise of a range of claimants or citizens and interested parties from greater Christchurch who have a strong understanding and knowledge of the experiences and viewpoints that are likely to be expressed, and the ways in which most people will feel comfortable finding out about and contributing to the Inquiry.

Scope

The Community Reference Group will provide advice and feedback on matters relating to the Inquiry process that are pertinent to claimants and interested parties in the community.

The Community Reference Group is an advisory group and has no decision-making powers. The Inquiry needs to meet the provisions of the [Inquiries Act](#) (2013). The Inquiry's scope is defined in the [Terms of Reference](#), announced in November 2018.

Role

The Community Reference Group may be asked, to:

1. Provide input into the design of the methods of engaging with claimants and interested parties, so that they can take part in the Inquiry in way/s that respect and reflect the importance of public participation in democratic processes;
2. Assist in identifying gaps in reaching communities of interest, population groups or individuals whom the Inquiry needs to hear from;
3. Provide feedback on the effectiveness of communications channels used and messages delivered throughout the Inquiry process, to support wide dissemination of information and encourage participation;
4. At the end of the submission and hearings process, provide feedback on the extent to which the Inquiry has heard from a fair and reasonable range of views, and if there are outstanding communities of interest or points of view that have not been heard from;
5. Provide feedback on early thinking from the Inquiry about the key findings being considered, from the perspective of the extent to which it reflects matters raised by claimants and interested parties;
6. Provide feedback on the interim report from the Inquiry from the perspective of the extent to which it reflects matters raised by claimants and interested parties.
7. Throughout the Inquiry process, offer practical assistance or guidance to the Inquiry Member, Head of Secretariat and wider team, on any emerging issues relating to the engagement and communications activities.

Members

The Community Reference Group is not a representative group, in that its membership does not aim to include all or any particular communities of interests or perspectives. However, the intention is

for it to comprise of claimants and interested parties from greater Christchurch who have a strong understanding and knowledge of the experiences and viewpoints that claimants and interested parties are likely to want to express, and the ways in which most people will feel comfortable contributing to the Inquiry.

Given the relatively tight timeframe for the Inquiry, possible members will be invited to participate on the Community Reference Group. (A call for nomination of members is likely to take too long to process and will constrain the opportunity for the Group to have input into the engagement plan's design.)

The size of the Community Reference Group can be flexible. It needs to reflect a range of local knowledge and understanding. However, for practicality (meeting logistics and efficiency) it should comprise no more than 12-15 members.

The Community Reference Group cannot make a collective submission but members can submit individually or on behalf of a community of interest or organisation that they represent.

Remuneration

Members to receive a gift of money in recognition of their contribution of advice and meeting participation.

Meetings' programme

Meetings' frequency, duration and location will be decided by mutual agreement at its first meeting. Likely programme:

- Meeting 1: (Mid February) Introduction to Group's role, outline of Inquiry process, discussion and input into planning community engagement and opportunities for participation through the inquiry process, and communication channels; discussion and input into the questions to be asked on the submission form
- Meeting 2: (April – indicative) Feedback on community engagement progress and activities, with regard to the matters within the group's terms of reference
- Meeting 3: (Late May – indicative) Provide feedback on Inquiry's initial thinking following submissions and forums, with regard to the matters within the group's terms of reference

Term of appointment

Commence in February 2019 and end its functions later in 2019.