



DEPARTMENT OF THE
PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
TE TARI O TE PIRIMIA ME TE KOMITI MATUA

Measuring the response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019: Summary of public engagement

*Waiho i te toipoto, kua i te toiroa |
Let us keep close together, not wide apart*

Background

Since the March 15th attack, DPMC has been talking with communities about the important issues raised by the Royal Commission of Inquiry. Many people made a direct link between inclusion and their feelings of personal security. We heard that some communities face daily threats as a result of their race or for expressing their identity, culture or faith.

In November 2021, Minister Little commissioned DPMC to begin work on developing a framework to measure the impact of the work Government is doing across the 44 recommendations arising from the [Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain \(RCOI\) report](#).

Like the overall response, this work has been guided by the whakataukī - *Waiho i te toipoto, kua i te toiroa* (Let us keep close together, not wide apart). It recognises the role we all have to play in making Aotearoa New Zealand safer and more inclusive. It also reminds us that we are stronger when we stand together.

As such, we began this work by engaging with communities to understand what the RCOI's vision of a safe, inclusive and diverse Aotearoa New Zealand would look like to them.

Purpose of this document

This document is a summary of the workshops, including over 1200 comments which were captured, using the words and voices of participants. It also provides an overview of the approach taken to involve communities in the development of the RCOI Outcomes Framework.

How we engaged with communities: our engagement approach

The workshops were set up to ensure everyone's voice, and those of their community could be included in this important work. The majority of the workshops were spent in small group discussions, prompted by the statements below:

<i>Acknowledging our bicultural heritage – supporting Māori-led approaches and tea o Māori principles.</i>			
<i>All communities feel accepted and included.</i>	<i>Affected whānau and survivors of the attack are well supported.</i>	<i>The national security system responds to the needs of all communities to make them feel safe.</i>	<i>New Zealanders know what is being done to prevent radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism.</i>

Participants were asked to discuss what achieving these goals would mean for them and their community. In particular, participants were invited to reflect on how their experiences might change at work, school, while shopping or using public services.

Between July and September 2022, ten workshops were held with a variety of communities which included:

- Three public workshops,
- Two workshops with ethnic and faith-based communities in Christchurch – including the affected whānau and survivors,
- A workshop with rainbow communities,
- A Disabled People's Organisation Coalition workshop,
- A workshop for young people,
- A workshop with the Federation of Islamic Associations and New Zealand (FIANZ) and the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ), and
- A workshop with the New Zealand Jewish Council.

What we heard: a summary of the key themes raised at the workshops

The workshop participants were generous with sharing their thoughts and feelings about their current situations and provided context to their perspectives. People were forthcoming, offering specific examples and detail around how the attacks has impacted them and their community.

Participants discussed both how they feel right now, what they are seeing *and* where they want to get to in the future. There were thoughts and stories shared about what it would mean to live in a country where everyone felt safe which included: “being able to exhale”, to plan, to focus on the future, and to feel optimistic about the future.

The topics of safety, inclusion and diversity were widely discussed and most of the conversation was focused on these areas. However, an overall observation from the workshop participants was how interrelated these topics are. At almost every workshop, it was noted that work cannot happen in one area without looking across others as well. For example, education was seen to impact all statements to make meaningful change.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- Many communities said that the partnership with Tangata Whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi needed to be honoured.
- Some participants also felt that te Tiriti o Waitangi needs to underpin all activity – however this was not unanimously shared by all participants.
- Some participants noted that, as migrants, they felt te Tiriti o Waitangi did not apply to them (or they weren’t sure how it applied to them).
- Young people in particular felt that tikanga Māori and te Tiriti o Waitangi should have a stronger presence in our culture and laws.

Education

- Education was frequently discussed across all workshops, and its importance was emphasised in creating successful, enduring change for future generations. Participants felt Education has a critical role in achieving the RCOI vision and intergenerational change.
- Early intervention and education about different cultures is needed.

Interconnectedness

- Almost all workshop participants noted that there are multiple connections between communities and that there's a lack of visibility across intersectional discrimination, representation, consultation, and experiences. It was widely observed that diverse communities experience the same violence in different ways.
- There was strong sentiment within and between communities to support and help each other. However, it was also recognised that there are some tensions within and between communities.
- There was agreement that while government has a strong role to play, communities, individuals, business and local government have a role to play as well.

Working with government and government policies

- Government should keep listening, being active and connecting with communities.
- Community leaders/groups would rather be doing things to develop their communities, not advocacy. Some community leaders felt their free time and advice to government is taken for granted.
- Many felt frustration that their communities are needing to repeat their experiences or share the same feedback to different agencies – there needs to be more coordination.
- Some participants acknowledged that Government does seem to be trying to engage with communities however participants want to be more involved/included in the process.
- Participants also felt they often needed to compartmentalise which singular community they were representing for different government engagements and would like recognition that people can be part of multiple communities, and that individuals are complex and may have needs spanning multiple communities, which should be accounted for.
- Wish to see government meaningfully change and tailor their services and the system for different groups, in collaboration with those communities.
- There is an increasing need for connection between grass root communities and the system, and in the mutual sharing of information.
- Change needs to be systemic and connected across government, there's no visibility of government's commitment to change.

Diversity, inclusion and representation

- In most workshops, participants noted there is a lack of representation and diversity in leadership positions that needs to be addressed – including in the public service.
- Diversity and bullying in schools are not taken seriously enough. Communities would like to see a multifaceted approach taken, providing support to teachers to be truly inclusive and to understand children's backgrounds and aspirations.
- Most communities felt that they'll know this work has been successful when all types of people are reflected in leadership positions; there needs to be representation at all levels of leadership, and to have racial biases and assumptions removed.
- There needs to be increased Rainbow representation i.e., there is currently no 'place' for Rainbow advocacy and visibility in central government.
- People need to understand what diversity is - competency and championing diversity is needed.
- Young people want to see a culture where people are willing to give up their space for a more diverse perspective; institutional biases would be removed, diversity would be seen in a normalised, non-tokenistic way.
- When thinking about the vision statements, the Disabled People Organisation Coalition want the disabled community to be able to be themselves without fear of barriers to participating in society, to feel safe in any system or community, and that there is genuine equity.
- There needs to be more accountability regarding the media and journalism covering these topics, including better representation.
- Immigration policies are seen as a significant barrier to social cohesion.

Security and safety

- Cultural safety was a large topic of conversation - many workshop participants felt that it's rarely seen or thought about, and that it needs to be driven collaboratively, by community.
- Many participants were concerned about hate speech, especially on social media platforms. Almost all participants wanted to ensure we did not take a 'siloed' approach to addressing hate speech and violent extremism - the Jewish, Muslim and rainbow communities wanted to ensure everything from the smallest insult to violent extremism is taken seriously and addressed.
- Participants were pleased to see work has started on the National Action Plan Against Racism. However most participants agreed there was a lot of work still to be done to address racism - and community leaders/groups acknowledged measuring this will be difficult.
- Participants have different places/domains in which they feel unsafe and it is common place for some communities to plan for safety measures before big or small events.
- Many workshop participants wanted more visibility and transparency around what is being done regarding harm prevention and security.
- The Rainbow community noted that community spaces are often defiled and damaged, and that they should be able to congregate and be in these spaces without feeling afraid. This sentiment was also echoed by members of ethnic and faith communities - particularly the Jewish community.
- There's no visibility of the security system and what is being done for prevention.
- Rainbow communities are more at risk of violence, including from the police.
- Young people want better inclusion, and respect which makes everyone feel safe and protected. They also noted that schools are not safe spaces for a wide range of communities.
- The harm, discrimination and disparities for disabled people are rarely recognised and are perpetuated by legacy institutional decisions, and this needs to change. The Disabled People Organisation Coalition noted that they're thankful for actions sparked by March 15 but felt unsure it would reach far enough to address all the abuses happening across society. They encouraged government not to lose sight of the smaller significant problems and wrong doings that continue to happen every day.

Support and assistance

- All communities noted that sadly, trauma is a normal part of the society they currently live in. For example, experiencing discrimination against a range of faiths when applying for jobs is still commonplace, and there is little to no support when this happens. Many people and communities said they were still hurting – from the March 15th attacks and other events that have harmed or marginalised communities.
- People need help to understand what support is available to them when they experience, for example, racist comments.
- It needs to be easier for community groups to access funding to deliver essential services.
- It was noted that support to those affected by the March 15 attacks has been inconsistent and now seems to be waning. For people who were affected by March 15, they still have needs and feel failed, and they still feel unsafe.
- Participants were concerned that the support and funding provided is inadequate for the ongoing (and in some cases, late emerging) intergenerational trauma. This relates to both the March 15 attacks, and everyday racism which is still being experienced.
- The Rainbow community would like to see people empowered to report, and for them to be engaged in a way that allows them to feel empowered rather than feeling like victims. They also noted that at a certain level of society, people are afraid of calling out hatred, and that it's exhausting when only targeted communities have to call it out.
- The Disabled People Organisation Coalition noted that they're glad to see effort to provide counselling and support to victims and families however more types of trauma need to be adequately supported and would like it to be recognised that there are many occasions where support is needed and not provided.
- The Muslim community is at a particular disadvantage because they cannot access lottery grants which far outsize other grants that are available.

Awareness and communications on government progress on implementing the 44 Recommendations

- Many workshop participants would like to see a broader view of what is going to happen, and less focus on what has already happened.
- The Canterbury ethnic and faith-based communities wanted to see meaningful acknowledgements of racism, colonialism and what the root issues are driving them. They also wanted to know specifically what is being done to prevent extremism and radicalisation.
- Disability community want resources and leaders to be more accessible to their community.
- Young people want to be informed of what is being done, and they felt this would bring the community closer to the people in power, making young people would more eager to be involved and contribute their knowledge.
- Better communication of the progress government is making on the recommendations would support further development of the RCOI Outcomes Framework, which is important.

What communities would like to see from this work

- There were general concerns from the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand and the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand that the way the framework is being pitched is too high-level. There was a desire to see the framework created in close reflection of the 44 recommendations. Establishing some over-arching outcomes could still be useful to set the wider context and provide a potential future direction for the framework.
- The Jewish community noted that some of the recommendations are very specific and have to be dealt with as such. Others are more aspirational and feel happier dealing with those in a more holistic and reflective manner.
- There needs to be something in the framework for everyone – including the 'middle-aged white Christian man'.
- Any proposal to measure the success of the response will need to look to both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Communities need to be involved and engaged with designing the RCOI Outcomes Framework and help with measurable metrics, indicators, and benefits
- It is important that DPMC uses its power for accountability and oversight of the RCOI recommendations.

What we are doing: Next steps

The comments and rich discussion which was provided by individuals and communities from these workshops across Aotearoa New Zealand, will help inform the design of the RCOI Outcomes Framework and guide DPMC when thinking about:

- What changes need to occur for the positive impacts to be realised (this could be institutional, social, economic, political, behavioural)
- How will it be known when success is being achieved, or on the way to being achieved?

DPMC will continue to work with other agencies, Kāpuia and Māori to develop proposals for consideration by Cabinet. Further updates on progress of this work will be published on the [DPMC website](#).

Updates on this work and other RCOI-related matters will also be shared through our pānui/newsletter.

***[Click here](#)* to sign up to Toipoto,
the RCOI Response Pānui**