

Hon Andrew Little

Minister of Defence
Minister for the Public Service
Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques



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Tēnā koe Arihia

Thank you for your letter of 7 February 2023 providing me with a summary of Kāpuia's feedback and advice across 2022. I also appreciated hearing from the roopu when I joined your hui on 13 March. The hui saw constructive kōrero on a range of matters, including those raised in your letter. I want to acknowledge the ongoing work by Kāpuia and your advice to me on the Government's response to the Royal Commission's report.

This year we mark four years since the terror attacks on 15 March. This was one of the darkest days in our nation's history. I remember the 51 Shuhada, survivors, witnesses and whānau who have had their lives irrevocably altered by this attack. We will continue to hold the Shuhada at the heart of our response. Everyone deserves to feel safe in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I have shared your letter with the Prime Minister and other relevant Ministers, and I will continue to encourage my Ministerial colleagues to engage with Kāpuia. I have heard that my colleagues who have already engaged with the roopu have found this a valuable opportunity to receive feedback on the work underway in their portfolios – thank you for enabling these opportunities.

As you know, in 2023 we have a new Prime Minister and some changes in Ministerial portfolios. With these changes, I can reaffirm the government's unwavering commitment to the response Kaupapa, and the Prime Minister emphasised this commitment in his February speech to the House. This Government stands with the victims of March 15 and continues to centre the 51 Shuhada, survivors, witnesses, whānau and community voices in our work.

I am pleased we begin 2023 with all 44 recommendations underway. The contribution you have made in providing advice to me and in your engagement with agencies has been critical to the progress made thus far. While it is important to highlight the progress achieved to date, I recognise there is still work to do and the remainder of my response focuses on the themes you raised in your most recent letter.

Government and communities working together

As the roopu has noted, ongoing engagement between government and communities is critical as we continue to progress the longer-term work programme. I know that my ministerial colleagues and

their agencies are committed to increasing capabilities to deliver a more meaningful community engagement, and to increase the impact of community voices on decision-making.

You will be aware that I mandated use of the Policy Community Engagement Tool (the Tool) for agencies engaging on the RCOI. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) has been supporting agencies to use the Tool through interagency meetings, workshops and webinars. DPMC has also undertaken quarterly reporting on agencies use of the Tool, and have gathered feedback from agencies to improve the Tool before it is rolled out to the wider public sector. I understand that the results of this reporting will be shared with you.

I am pleased to inform you that Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission is beginning work to bring the Tool to the wider public service. This not only meets the intent of Recommendation 38, but also New Zealand's Open Government Partnership Commitments. Commitment One of the Fourth Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2023-24 is to adopt a community engagement tool for significant initiatives. I have asked Te Kawa Mataaho to consult with you on this mahi. This is a significant step for community engagement in Aotearoa New Zealand and reiterates our commitment to Recommendation 38.

As you may remember, the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities and I met with survivors, witnesses and whānau of the 51 Shuhada, and Christchurch ethnic and faith communities in September 2022. That hui was an opportunity to engage directly with the communities, to update them on the progress on the response, and to hear communities' feedback. Feedback has been shared with relevant agencies, to support interagency collaboration on issues of note to the affected community.

National security

I want to assure the roopu that we are working hard to address the changes recommended to the national security system and look forward to a more focused kōrero on these matters. Your input on these issues is invaluable, and I look forward to hearing the results of your workshop on this with officials from DPMC at your last hui.

National action plan against racism and hate speech reform

I understand that Kāpuia has some concerns around the delivery of the national action plan against racism scheduled for 2024. I want to assure the roopu that while this is the expected date of completion, substantive work has already taken place, including focused community and government engagement to inform the priorities of the plan.

The recent decision to refer the hate speech and hate crime reform work to the Law Commission has been made to ensure the Government remains true to its commitment as addressed in the RCOI report. We will await the report and findings from the Law Commission once it completes the review.

Supporting affected whānau, witnesses and survivors to explore restorative justice

My colleagues and I will consider options for responding to recommendation 27 of the RCOI report later this year. I will then be seeking an opportunity to discuss next steps with Kāpuia.

Accessibility of information

I agree that easy to understand, accessible information is important, both to build trust and confidence in the national security sector, and across government more generally. As the Lead Coordination

Minister, I will encourage agencies working on the RCOI response to apply the intent of the Plain Language Act to their mahi.

To support progress on the response being accessible and transparent, DPMC has updated the Royal Commission of Inquiry Progress Tracker. The updated version highlights progress of the Royal Commission response as of February 2023 and is now available on the DPMC website.

I want to acknowledge again the work done by the roopu in the past year and look forward to working with Kāpuia in 2023 on this important mahi as we continue to work towards realising the Government's vision of a safer and more inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Little". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon Andrew Little

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