



Report

Date: 20 November 2020

Security Level: IN CONFIDENCE

To: Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment

Responding to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Attack on Christchurch Mosques

Purpose of the report

- 1 This paper updates you on the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) role in responding to the upcoming Royal Commission of Inquiry Report into the Attack on Christchurch Mosques (RCOI).

Executive Summary

- 2 The RCOI is due to present its report to the Governor-General on 26 November 2020. The earliest date the report could be tabled in the House (and made public) is Thursday 3 December 2020.
- 3 On 17 November officials from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) met with the Prime Minister to confirm her preferences around details of the response process, including the timing. We understand those details will be confirmed in the coming week but have been advised that the report is likely to be tabled in the House on the 8th of December.
- 4 MSD's Chief Executive is part of the Security Intelligence Board (SIB) for the purposes of this RCOI report, and an MSD official is part of the Response Steering Group (RSG) being led by DPMC. A small number of MSD officials will have access to the report for the purpose of providing advice to Ministers prior to the report being tabled.
- 5 To ensure consistency and coordination around messaging, the RCOI Communications Working Group, led by DPMC, will be coordinating communications across government in response to the report.
- 6 MSD is working with other agencies across the social sector to ensure we have key people available during the immediate response period and over the weekend of Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 November to prepare all-of-government advice to Ministers.
- 7 MSD will be contributing to the all-of-government response and leading on advice related to any recommendations concerning your portfolio as well as the Cabinet agreed social inclusion cross-government work programme, which is now part of the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities' portfolio.
- 8 Officials will continue to keep you up to date on the response process and any developments at the regular agency meetings.
- 9 MSD is briefing Minister Radhakrishnan on the work to improve social inclusion in her capacity as Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities.

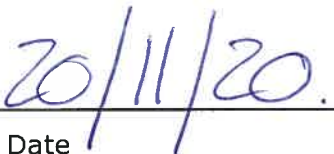
Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **note** that this briefing contains key information relating to the all-of-government process for providing a high-level response to the RCOI report after it is presented to the Governor-General on 26 November 2020 and before it is tabled in the House as soon as is practicable afterwards
- 2 **note** that officials from MSD will continue to keep you and your office updated on the process and any developments at the regular agency meetings
- 3 **note** that MSD is briefing the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities on the work to improve social inclusion in Aotearoa New Zealand.



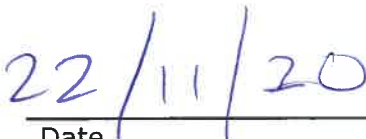
Molly Elliott
General Manager
Social Development Child and Youth Policy



Date



Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development and
Employment



Date

Background

MSD's role in supporting victims, families and Muslim communities

- 1 MSD has played a significant role in supporting the victims, their families, and Muslim communities in Christchurch and across the country following the attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019.
- 2 Immediately following the attacks, 12 Muslim staff travelled to Christchurch to support with case management. MSD also introduced legislation to ensure those impacted were eligible for financial assistance, stood up a government helpline, launched a new case management service specifically for victims and their families, and E Tu Whanau colleagues leveraged strong and enduring relationships to support Muslim communities in Christchurch and across the country. Appendix One outlines MSD support in more detail.

Improving social inclusion in Aotearoa New Zealand

- 3 Post 15 March, calls came for Government to consider initiatives to support greater social inclusion in communities. In September 2019, Cabinet considered work related to building social inclusion. While the attack on the Christchurch Mosques prompted this work, there are other good reasons to take a more focused and deliberate approach to improving social inclusion and making Aotearoa New Zealand a place where all people feel they belong and can contribute.
- 4 In addition to demographic and population changes that mean Aotearoa New Zealand is a very diverse nation, there is also recognition that some groups are not experiencing the same opportunities as others. These inequities not only cause resentment and dissatisfaction, but negatively impact on key areas of people's lives. For example, more than 1 in 5 people are digitally excluded, and many groups such as disabled people, Māori, and Pacific peoples are disadvantaged in the labour market and experience poorer health and wellbeing outcomes.
- 5 In terms of governance and leadership of the work programme, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee has oversight of this work (SWC-20-MIN-0071 refers). The Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities now has overarching responsibility for the cross-government social inclusion agenda. We are briefing Minister Radhakrishnan on her role in leading this work. In terms of the MSD response to the RCOI, you will lead on any recommendations related to MSD policies, services and programmes, including those to improve social inclusion.

Improving social inclusion is a goal for Covid-19 recovery

- 6 In June, Cabinet agreed that improving social inclusion should be a goal for thinking and planning for the Covid-19 recovery.
- 7 To support agencies to take a more considered approach MSD and DPMC, in consultation with government agencies, created a draft social inclusion framework. It is intended to provide agencies with more direction, a common language, and increased understanding about ways to think about social inclusion in both their policy and service development. The framework is based on MSD's rapid evidence review (see Appendix Two for a summary of MSD's rapid evidence review). Cabinet agreed that we test the framework with a targeted group of stakeholders. We are currently carrying out this targeted engagement.
- 8 Once the social inclusion work is in the public domain (after the Cabinet papers have been proactively released) we intend to circulate the framework for wider testing with communities.

Scope of the Royal Commission of Inquiry

- 9 The RCOI is examining what state sector agencies knew about the individual's activities before the attack; what they did with that information; what measures

agencies could have taken to prevent the attack; and what measures agencies should take to prevent such attacks in the future.¹

- 10 MSD has provided information to the RCOI. In accordance with section 15 orders,² named individuals have fact-checked the parts of the RCOI report relating to MSD.

RCOI response structure and responsibilities

- 11 The Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Minister of Police, Minister responsible for the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) and the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), Minister of Customs, Minister of Immigration, Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities are the lead Ministers to engage with the Royal Commission and officials to progress the findings of the Royal Commission for Cabinet consideration.³ Following DPMC's meeting with the PM, the list of responsible Ministers has been updated to also include the Deputy PM and Min of Finance, the Min of Foreign Affairs and the Min for Social Development and Employment.
- 12 Cabinet charged the Security and Intelligence Board (SIB)⁴ with overseeing the government response at officials' level. The Lead Official is Tony Lynch (Deputy Chief Executive, DPMC).
- 13 The Response Steering Group (RSG) (which includes Policy, Legal and Communications functions and officials from 16 agencies, including MSD) is responsible for considering the RCOI findings and recommendations and providing advice to the Lead Official, SIB and responsible Ministers. The RSG is chaired by DPMC.

Responding to the RCOI recommendations

- 14 Ministers and officials will not receive the report prior to it being finalised. While no officials have seen the RCOI's findings or recommendations, we believe the RCOI is likely to recommend changes across the national security system and on social inclusion, with potential operational and budget implications.
- 15 MSD is working with other agencies (both through the RSG and the Social Inclusion Oversight Group) to ensure key subject matter experts are available in the days following the report being presented (including over the weekend of the 28 and 29 November) so there is a strong and coordinated social sector response to the report, in the immediate and longer-term.
- 16 The all-of-government response will feature opportunities to make a range of positive improvements. This response will require significant policy analysis, engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including members of affected communities, along with discussion with academics and across Government on recommendations. The response is likely to take a broad, system-wide view to national security, including ways to improve social inclusion and build strong and resilient communities, where all people

¹ RCOI Terms of Reference

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2019/0072/latest/LMS183988.html>

² The RCOI has issued a large number of non-publication orders under section 15 of the Inquiries Act 2013. The orders strictly limit who can see Commission correspondence and agency documents provided to the Commission. Agencies and staff named on the section 15 order cannot disseminate the listed documents and information to other agencies or to other staff, unless they are also listed on the section 15 order.

³ ERS-19-MIN-0026 refers.

⁴ SIB is the group of Chief Executives responsible for the governance of the external threats and intelligence aspects of national security.

feel they belong and have the resources they need to meaningfully participate and contribute.

- 17 Work to improve social inclusion and wellbeing are considered complementary to preventing and countering all forms of violent extremism. Our social sector focus is on the things we are already doing and should do more of for other reasons, eg redressing inequitable access to employment, housing, education and health. In the longer-term these investments will improve subjective wellbeing and reduce the likelihood people are attracted to extremist causes.

Expectations for the Government response and outreach to communities

- 18 The RCOI have engaged with Muslim communities and other faith-based communities as part of their inquiry process. Muslim and other communities have made a substantial contribution to the RCOI. There are high expectations of Government in addressing the issues that will be raised in the RCOI report. The RSG has developed a strategy for outreach to inform the fulsome Government response. However, RSG engagement (in terms of timing and pace) will need to be guided by the wishes of communities and the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Timeline and key steps during the immediate response

- 19 To ensure a tightly coordinated approach, particularly around communications, in the days following the presentation of the report and before it is tabled (and therefore public), the RSG has set out a timeline, including key steps as a guide for agencies.
- 20 The timeline and steps are flexible as we may need to adjust and adapt, depending on the breadth and nature of the recommendations. Importantly the wishes of the victims, families and Muslim communities will shape the timetable.
- 21 DPMC as the overall lead is seeking the Prime Minister's direction on some of the key assumptions and response options. Once we have confirmation from DPMC, we will advise you and your office.
- 22 The RCOI Communications Working Group, led by DPMC, will coordinate communications around the response to ensure consistency in messaging, and awareness across deliverables and timelines. The Prime Minister will be leading communications around the response. MSD is linked into this process.

The RCOI report is due on 26 November 2020

- 23 The RCOI is scheduled to provide their report to the Governor-General on 26 November 2020. The Governor-General is required to provide the report to the Responsible Minister for presentation to the House of Representatives, thereby releasing it to the public 'as soon as practicable after the inquiry has reported'. The House of Representatives will have several sitting days in early December.
- 24 Prior to tabling, access to the report will be tightly controlled, with a small number of hardcopies being made available for Ministers responsible for the RCOI response. Chief Executives and named officials will also have controlled access for the purpose of providing advice to Ministers.
- 25 Officials have been working on the assumption that the report could be tabled as early as Thursday 3 December. However, decisions around the timing of tabling will be taken by the Prime Minister and are likely to be informed by her engagement with the people most impacted.
- 26 At a high level we understand that the Government response will have three overarching phases:
 - Delivering a high-level, immediate-term response to the RCOI report release, including signalling that Government will undertake a period of reflection (December 2020);

- Developing and delivering the fulsome Government response, which will articulate Government agreement, agreement in principle or disagreement with RCOI recommendations (first quarter 2021); and
- Implementation of the Government response.

Next steps

- 27 MSD is continuing to work closely with other social sector agencies and DPMC to ensure we are prepared to provide a coordinated social sector response, particularly around social inclusion.
- 28 We will continue to keep you and your office advised as we get more information. In the lead up to the presentation of the RCOI report and the days following, the agency meeting is a good vehicle for doing this.
- 29 We will provide you with advice on the recommendations including any implications for MSD and opportunities for us to contribute to the Government's response.

Appendix One

Summary of MSD support to the victims and their families

30 A summary of the key support MSD has provided to the victims and their families and Muslim communities following 15 March 2019:

- Standing up the Government helpline through the contact centre.
- Administering civil defence payments.
- 12 Muslim staff travelled to Christchurch to assist with case management immediately after the attacks.
- Launching the recovery case management service specifically for victims and their families to help coordinate access to services and support across government and the community.
- Providing work broker assistance for people with impacted businesses.
- Introducing legislation to exempt donations received in response to the attacks from cash asset testing for the purpose of determining eligibility for MSD assistance.
- Waiving the two-year residence requirement so that those directly impacted by the attacks (with residence) could access main benefits and supplementary assistance.
- Introduced and administered a new Ministerial Welfare Programme to extend financial assistance to those who were impacted by the attacks, who are not able to earn enough income to support themselves and their whānau and not able to access statutory benefits.
- Establishing a 'skills package' which helps impacted clients learn English as a Second Language, build financial capability, offers employment support, and driver education.
- Funding a central pool of licenced immigration advisors and immigration lawyers (established by Immigration NZ), to provide independent immigration advice to those affected by the attacks.
- Establishing a Community Activation Fund to support and enable community owned actions.
- E Tu Whanau leveraged its existing relationships to support Muslim communities in Christchurch and across the country.
- Waived the three-year residency stand-down period for permanent residents to access Student Loans and Student Allowance for those who hold a Christchurch Response (2019) Visa, or who would have been eligible for a Christchurch Response (2019) Visa but already held another residence Visa.

File ref: A12911098

REP/20/11/1109

Author: (Pip Baldwin, Principal Analyst, Social Development Child and Youth Policy)

Responsible manager: (Molly Elliott, General Manager, Social Development Child and Youth Policy)

Appendix Two

Summary of findings from the Rapid Evidence Review on Social Inclusion

- 1 In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, we take social inclusion to be the degree to which:
 - communities across New Zealand embrace diversity and ensure all people feel recognised and accepted
 - people are free from prejudice and discrimination
 - people have resources, skills and knowledge to meaningfully participate.
- 2 We identified six key ways to strengthen social inclusion – they are:
 - **1. Fostering common values and inclusive social norms.** Leaders at all levels can support an important and ongoing national conversation about New Zealand’s values and norms, including the value of protecting and celebrating diversity and upholding shared, civic norms. The principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) can also support this process by providing a distinctive, whole-of-Aotearoa New Zealand approach; one that values and upholds the nation’s bicultural foundations while embracing New Zealand’s increasingly diverse future as a strength.
 - **2. Encouraging and facilitating positive interactions between people.** There is compelling evidence that creating opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to positively interact with each other helps to promote more positive inter-group attitudes. The policy implications of this are wide-ranging, including the need to ensure schools, communities, workplaces, institutions and media representations better reflect New Zealand’s diversity, as well as facilitating and normalising positive interactions between diverse groups.
 - **3. Tackling harms to inclusion, including prejudice, discrimination and other harmful behaviours.** There is clear evidence that many New Zealanders routinely experience prejudice and discrimination, which negatively affects people’s wellbeing and prevents people from participating in society. This discrimination takes a variety of forms and includes not just interpersonal but also structural discrimination and prejudice. Comprehensive, evidence-based strategies and ongoing monitoring are needed to prevent and limit these impacts, especially in schools and workplaces where most prejudice and discrimination occurs.
 - **4. Supporting people to have the knowledge and skills they need to participate.** Ensuring equitable access to education and training, that adapts to meet people’s diverse needs, is a critical long-term driver of social inclusion. An inclusive education system should give all New Zealanders the social and emotional skills needed to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives, as well as empowering people from diverse backgrounds to be able to participate socially and economically.
 - **5. Supporting people to have a voice and feel heard.** There is very good evidence that giving people a voice, ensuring people feel heard, and treating people fairly contributes to people’s trust, civic participation, and willingness to make compromises for the common good. Providing equitable access to these opportunities to have a voice and feel heard would help start to address the marked disparities in institutional trust felt by marginalised groups.
 - **6. Reducing inequality and improving opportunities for people by providing support and resources.** Inequality in people’s access to resources and opportunities are a fundamental brake on progress towards greater social inclusion. Redressing these inequities, especially through access to employment opportunities and ongoing reforms to the tax-transfer system, are essential for building social inclusion over the long term.