



Community Panel Meeting Minutes

Date	4 May 2022
Time	6.00-8.00pm
Venue	Zoom
Attendees	Api Talemaitoga, Aram Kim, Margaret Brown, Michelle Mascoll, Hafsa Ahmed, Sarah Sparks, Peter Mersi (DPMC – item 3), Cheryl Barnes (DPMC – item 3), Amber Bill (DPMC General Manager), Rory McKenzie (DPMC Communications), Jeremy Greenbrook-Held (DPMC Strategy and Policy – item 5), Louise Cox (DPMC Secretariat), Emma Francis (DPMC Secretariat)
Chair	Sarah Sparks
Minute taker	Emma Francis
Apologies	Callum Woodhouse, Jordon Milroy

Items 1-2: Welcome and confirmation of minutes

1. Sarah opened the meeting and welcomed the Community Panel (the Panel) members and other attendees.
2. The minutes from the 13 April 2022 meeting were confirmed.

Item 3: Update on future of COVID-19 advisory groups and feedback from the Panel on their experience of being on the Panel

3. Peter Mersi and Cheryl Barnes attended the meeting to share their reflections of the future of the response to COVID-19 and hear feedback from the Panel regarding their experience of being on the panel.
4. Peter and Cheryl thanked the Panel for the value they have brought to the response, ensuring the community voice is heard and bringing a range of insights which have resulted in practical changes. The importance of carrying this type of community engagement forward was highlighted.
5. Peter noted that recent conversations have been around the shift from centralised decision making to empowering communities, individuals and businesses to make decisions. He highlighted that requirements need to be unwound in a managed and safe way that protects individuals and communities that are at a higher risk.

6. Cheryl informed that Panel of planned work led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) to capture lessons from the response to COVID-19 and to look at how they could be applied to other issues the government is facing.
7. The Community Panel provided the following feedback.
 - a) Communities aren't always reporting rapid antigen test (RAT) results, especially if they are non-English speaking, as they find it overwhelming to use the My Covid Record website. Therefore, they are not reporting a positive test result which means they miss receiving wraparound services and funded RATs. For large families buying them is a challenge, and also means people are leaving their homes/self-isolation to buy them as they are not aware they are available for free.
 - b) People are avoiding social settings due to the risk of a positive pre-departure test stopping them visiting family members abroad.
 - c) The way RAT use in hospitals is conducted has made some rainbow community members feel unsafe. Word has spread in some communities that calling an ambulance is a way to bypass the need to have a RAT.
 - d) Some members of the community are having difficulty with the language options on the COVID-19 website landing page.
 - e) Community Panel members noted the value both they and their communities have received from being able to have their feedback and insights heard and information received via this forum.
8. Sarah reflected on her experience as Chair of the Panel, highlighting her observations of a change in traditional siloed approaches of government to more collaboration and cross-agency functions. She reflected, in particular, on the opportunity to share flax-root experiences directly with system leaders and the importance of embedding these types of engagement mechanisms going forward.

Item 4: Discussion about the survey and Chairs' report

9. Sarah noted that later this week a survey will be sent to Panel members to capture their views and feedback of being on the Panel, and that the responses will form the basis of a Chair's report.
10. A question was raised around the *volume* of the voices from the group within government and how their insights have been taken on board. It was suggested the feedback loop needs to be strengthened so that there is greater visibility of the value of the Panel's mahi.
11. A question was raised whether the other advisory groups are also doing a survey. It was noted that the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group are doing a rapid review of lessons from the Omicron outbreak.
12. Sarah noted it would be fruitful for agencies to have a lessons learnt workshop with the communities they've been involved with throughout the pandemic.

Item 5: Update on modelling and data trends

13. Jeremy Greenbrook-Held attended the meeting to give a presentation on COVID-19 modelling and data trends. The presentation covered:

- a) case modelling
 - b) hospitalisations
 - c) fatalities
 - d) infections.
14. Jeremy highlighted that we are not currently at the end of the COVID-19 outbreak. The current outbreak is likely to have a long tail and there will also be future outbreaks and new variants.
15. The Panel raised the following matters and questions:
- a. Whether the modelling takes different ethnic groups into account, noting that the Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African ethnicities (MELAA) grouping is not an accurate representation of the communities within Aotearoa New Zealand, and that the one size fits all approach does not work.
 - i. Jeremy responded that the modelling does not specifically take into account the different ethnic groups in Aotearoa, due to our unique ethnic makeup and lack of international example to base parameters on. He noted that modelling for ethnic groups will be looked at for the next financial year.
 - b. The effect of delayed vaccinations for younger cohorts and different rates of uptake of the vaccination
 - c. What the longer term considerations are regarding the vulnerability of certain groups due to vulnerabilities for other reasons (for example groups with low measles vaccination rates)
 - i. Jeremy noted that there is a clear seasonal mortality trend with flu tracking, which has not occurred over the past couple of years due to closed borders and lockdowns. This means that people have not built up immunity to newer flu variants, which will likely mean this year's flu mortality rate is higher than previous years.
 - d. Whilst modelling of ethnicities are important, COVID-19 has also taught us that faith communities played an important part in the outbreaks. There has been hesitancy within certain faiths due to misinformation and this is a characteristic that could also be considered.
16. Jeremy welcomed further feedback from the Panel following the meeting and agreed to share the presentation.

Item 6: Communications update

17. Rory McKenzie attended from DPMC to give an update on communications work including:
- a. the new "Doing it for each other" campaign, which sees people from around the motu sharing their stories
 - b. work in the disabilities space as a result of the Disability Rights Commissioner-led inquiry into the Omicron response
 - c. the new face mask exemption process starting from 30 April
 - d. a continued focus to provide information in different languages and alternative formats for travellers to New Zealand.

18. The Panel raised that:

- a. they are hearing good feedback on the “Doing it for each other” campaign
- b. many people are finding the New Zealand Traveller Declaration difficult to complete, particularly older people
- c. while there is a good variety of content on the COVID-19 website that is translated into other languages, Google searches in other languages do not bring up the official translated COVID-19 information. Rory noted that this issue has been investigated but is unable to be rectified.

Item 7: Meeting closure and karakia

19. The meeting closed with a karakia from Aram.

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