

Hon Judith Collins KC



Attorney General
Minister of Defence
Minister for Digitising Government
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology
Minister for Space
Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the
Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques

10 JUN 2024

Arihia Bennett MNZM
Chair, Kāpuia
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Dear Ms Bennett,

Thank you for your letters of 24 April 2024 and 28 May 2024 and for sharing the final report of Kāpuia.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge that the 15 March attacks remain one of the darkest days New Zealand has experienced. The survivors, families and witnesses to the attacks and their loved ones whose lives were taken will never be forgotten by New Zealanders.

Second, I want to acknowledge the contribution each member of Kāpuia has made to the government response to the Royal Commission. Your lived experiences, reflections, insights, and expertise have brought immense value. Your final report was comprehensive and will continue to influence our work as we wrap up the coordinated response phase and integrate the lessons learned.

I note that Kāpuia felt it was not consulted on decisions to not to implement a small number of recommendations. These were government decisions made by a range of ministers. I convened a meeting of relevant ministers on 1 May which was an opportunity to discuss the coordinated response in the context of broader government priorities. Collectively, we have made a genuine commitment to meet the intent of the recommendations while streamlining resources and effort. Front of mind are the ongoing challenges that New Zealand faces, and the need to be agile and to consider the safety and security of all New Zealanders.

The remainder of this letter responds to your report and the advice you provided to me as I prepared my own advice to Cabinet. It is structured around the four key areas you identified in your final report.

- The victims and their families must be remembered and supported.
- Establishing a National Security and Intelligence Agency.
- Building public trust and confidence in the national security system.
- Enhancing social cohesion to reduce discrimination and racism and to support national security.

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The victims and their families must be remembered and supported.

There will be survivors and families who need ongoing mental health and trauma support. While at different stages of their recovery journey, I have heard from the community that many have utilised the service and supports provided and made significant steps towards their recovery over the last five years. Ongoing mental health support will continue to be available through a wide range of agencies and NGOs including the Muslim Wellbeing Ōtautahi Christchurch, Victim Support, Christchurch Resettlement Services and General Practitioners.

Minister Matt Doocey (the Member for Waimakariri) and I met with the community at three meetings in Christchurch on 10 May. We wanted to reassure the community that while the Government has made changes to the way services are delivered, agencies and NGOs will continue to provide support. Continued support for the affected community and their families will come from individual government and non-government agencies.

Officials from Immigration New Zealand, Ministry for Social Development (MSD), ACC, Kāinga Ora, and Te Whatu Ora also attended each of these meetings, so the community could hear more specifically how we plan to transition the response. MSD is currently working through the transition for each individual family that still needs support on a case-by-case basis. This will include developing an individual transition plan with each family currently in the Kaiwhakaoranga Service to ensure their ongoing needs are met by existing services.

The Prime Minister has asked Minister Doocey to be the government point of contact for the community. He will ensure the government maintains a relationship with the community to facilitate connections and ensure they continue to have access the services they need and identify where there may be gaps.

Your report recommended that government undertake discussions with victims and families on the issue of compensation. When I met with the community in May I discussed financial compensation and explained that I will not be progressing a discussion on this. This decision is consistent with the approach taken by the previous Labour Government. Our Government agrees with that approach.

Separately, I have considered the Royal Commission's recommendation on restorative justice. I consider that the government has taken a restorative approach in the services and supports put in place and opportunities for the community to influence these services and the direction of the response. This includes, but is not limited to, the Kaiwhakaoranga Specialist Case Management Service, the Collective Impact Board, the permanent resident visa, the establishment of the Muslim Wellbeing Team, support for early learning centres, victim and legal support, financial support for increased security arrangements and funding to support engagement on the response.

The Coronial Inquiry, and support for some family members to attend, has also enabled the community to better understand the events of 15 March. For these reasons, I have decided not to proceed with further discussions on any restorative justice, extra to what has been provided over the past five years. Following your letter on 28 May, I have included further information about my decision in my advice to Cabinet.



Establishing a National Intelligence and Security Agency

In Kāpuia's report and other advice to me, you have noted your strong support for the creation of a National Intelligence and Security Agency to improve leadership, accountability, and coordination of the national security system. Cabinet will consider this and other decisions in late June, but as you know the Government is looking to streamline rather than add complexity to government architecture.

Building public trust and confidence in the national security system

Critical to building public trust and confidence in the national security system is improving leadership and accountability. I consider that the National Security Strategy (the strategy) and associated Programme of Action, which the previous Cabinet approved in July 2023, addresses these points. I know that agencies involved in national security have made positive steps forward since the Royal Commission's report including building stronger relationships with the community, engaging more effectively, and increasing the number public documents available. I expect this to be an ongoing area of focus. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities will also continue to be a conduit for communities to establish stronger connections with government, and each other.

There is also a range of performance monitoring, oversight, and reporting mechanisms in place for national security agencies. These include the Ombudsman, the Privacy Commissioner, the Auditor-General, and the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security, as well as the Parliamentary Select Committee process. A further confidence measure will be an amendment to the Public Finance Act 1989 which will be made in response to recommendation 5 of the report. This will require the intelligence agencies to provide performance information that can be subject to performance audit by the Auditor-General. A trial audit of the agencies' performance information will occur for FY 2023/24, before standard auditing begins in FY 2024/25.

I appreciate your strong support for a pathway for the public to report concerning violent extremism and terrorism-related behaviours and incidents. Again, Cabinet will consider this issue later in June balanced against a number of priorities for public safety and security, the existing mechanisms already in place and a commitment to efficient delivery of public services.

Enhancing social cohesion to reduce discrimination and racism and support national security.

I want to acknowledge that racism and discrimination are important areas of concern for you and for communities. I refer to the MSD's Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Strategic Framework (and associated tools and resources) and the continued work on updating the school curriculum to be knowledge-rich and support the diverse needs of all learners. MSD will also be developing a report back on Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion Measurement Framework by the end of 2024.

I also want to acknowledge Kāpuia's advice on setting up a similar group in the context of future response to major traumatic events. Kāpuia has helped government to respond to the Royal Commission and you have helped bring community voices to the forefront. Your final report, alongside other important reports like the Collective Impact Board's Collective Trauma



Response and Recovery report provide important reflections for the way in which government may consider future responses. MSD has also recently completed a review of the Kaiwhakaoranga Specialist Case Management Service which captures lessons learned and can be used to inform service design and delivery by MSD.

I have shared your report with my ministerial colleagues, and I have asked DPMC officials to publish the report on the DPMC website following Cabinet's decisions on the coordinated response. As Cabinet is yet to consider some of the issues raised in this letter, I am sure you will understand my decision that your final report and this letter of response should be published after Cabinet decisions have been announced.

Thank you again for your continued dedication and commitment to the Royal Commission response and to your communities. You should be proud of the contribution you have made not only to the Royal Commission response but to helping to enhance how the public sector engages with and reflects the voice of communities in their work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Judith Collins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Judith Collins KC MP

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