



19 June 2018

Tēnā koutou katoa, talofa lava and warm Pacific greetings

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to make a submission or attend a meeting with Inquiry panel members over the last two months.

We've received over 5,000 submissions, and Panel members have attended over 300 meetings with individuals, community groups and stakeholders around the country. We've heard from many people about their experiences of mental health and addiction. This includes individuals' personal experiences (directly or as family/whanau), what's working well and what isn't, and the experiences of providers, clinicians and advocates.

I thank everyone who has participated. I've been deeply moved by people's willingness to share very personal stories. I acknowledge those family members who have lost loved ones through suicide and who have shared their pain and their ideas for the future direction of mental health and addiction in New Zealand.

Over the next three weeks we continue our regional meetings and further *Meet the Panel* sessions. We will be visiting Whanganui, New Plymouth, Gisborne, Hamilton, Christchurch, Greymouth and Kaikoura.

This will complete our regional visits, but not our engagement. We have further meetings planned with some groups we've not heard from yet. We will continue to meet with people into August. Due to our reporting timeline we have to make some hard decisions, as we cannot meet with everyone we would like to or who has asked to meet with us.

Our attention now turns in part to bringing together and reflecting on the breadth of views and ideas we've heard. Together with our Secretariat, we will be reviewing all the information we've received, including people's experiences, and starting to formulate our recommendations for the future direction of mental health and addiction – and mental wellbeing – in Aotearoa.

The Government has asked the Inquiry panel to report back by 31 October 2018 so that our advice and recommendations can feed into the 2019 budget. We're working hard to meet our deadline.

To those who have made submissions or shared your stories and experience with us directly, thank you. We intend to honour your contributions by developing a report that leads to significant improvements in mental health and addiction in New Zealand and creates hope for the future. This Inquiry is a once in a generation opportunity to make real change. We are seizing that opportunity.

Hei konā mai

Ron Paterson
Inquiry Chair