

Summary version of the Terms of Reference

Overview

The Terms of Reference, issued by the Government, set out the purpose of the Inquiry, which includes:

1. hearing the voices of the community, people with lived experience of mental health and addiction challenges, people affected by suicide, and people involved in preventing and responding to mental health and addiction challenges, on New Zealand's current approach to mental health and addiction, and what needs to change;
2. reporting on how New Zealand is preventing mental health and addiction challenges and responding to the needs of people with those challenges; and
3. recommending specific changes to improve New Zealand's approach to mental health, with a particular focus on equity of access, community confidence in the mental health system and better outcomes, particularly for Māori and other groups with disproportionately poorer outcomes.

Areas the inquiry will focus on include:

- mental health challenges faced by people across the full spectrum from mental distress to enduring psychiatric illness;
- mental health and addiction needs from the perspective of both:
 - preventing mental health and addiction challenges and promoting mental well-being; and
 - identifying and responding to people with mental health and addiction challenges;
- prevention of suicide, as well as support for those close to someone who has taken their own life.

The Inquiry covers the breadth of current New Zealand policies, services, programmes, and interventions (referred to as 'activities' below) in the mental health and addiction area, including:

- activities directly related to mental health and addiction undertaken within the broader health and disability sector (in community, primary and secondary care), as well as other sectors, including: education, social welfare, housing, justice and corrections, disability support, accident compensation and wider workplace relations and safety systems, Māori development, and emergency response systems;
- opportunities to build on the efforts of whānau, communities, employers, people working in mental health and other sectors or organisations to promote mental health;
- activities for key groups: Māori, Pacific peoples, youth, people with disabilities, the rainbow/LGBTIQ+ community, the prison population, migrants and refugees, the isolated (including elderly), veterans, and rural populations;
- activities in support of families and whānau affected by mental health and addiction (including suicide) of loved ones;
- activities undertaken by, or funded by, government agencies and those undertaken by non-government agencies;

- activities addressing risk factors, which include (but are not limited to):
 - ease of access and cultural attitudes to alcohol (and other drugs);
 - continued dislocation of Māori from their whānau, communities and iwi;
 - increasing dislocation within our ethnic migrant and refugee communities; and
 - a range of social determinants such as poverty; inequality; inequity; lack of affordable housing; low levels of educational achievement; low—paid work; exposure to abuse, neglect, family violence or other trauma; social isolation (particularly in the elderly and rural populations); deprivation persisting across generations; access to welfare, disability support and accident compensation; engagement in the criminal justice system; and discrimination.

Recommendations about what needs to change to refresh and improve mental health and addiction outcomes in Aotearoa

The Terms of Reference require the Inquiry Panel to provide recommendations on some important areas that will determine how New Zealand approaches mental health and addiction in the future, and how support is best provided to those who need it.

The inquiry will make recommendations on the following areas:

- roles and responsibilities of agencies in the health sector, including a re—established Mental Health Commission;
- improved coordination between the health system and other systems such as education, social, housing, justice, disability support, accident compensation, and emergency response;
- the design and delivery of services (for example, kaupapa Māori approaches to mental health) and effective engagement with all relevant stakeholders including mental health service providers, and consumers and their communities and whānau;
- governance, leadership and accountability levers to ensure access to an appropriate standard of mental health services across the country;
- fiscal approaches, models and funding arrangements;
- data collection, programme evaluation and information flows;
- the suite of relevant regulatory frameworks, including the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 and the Substance Abuse (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 2017;
- workforce planning, training, support and management; and
- any other matters that the Inquiry believes are important.