



Report

Date: 13 May 2021

Security Level: IN CONFIDENCE

To: Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan, Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment

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

Cabinet paper on social cohesion and engagement material

Purpose of the report

- 1 This paper seeks your agreement to lodge your updated Cabinet paper on social cohesion and public engagement following agency and Ministerial consultation. The Cabinet paper, and engagement material have been updated and are due with the Cabinet Office by 12 noon Friday 14 May for the Social Wellbeing Cabinet Committee (SWC) meeting on 19 May 2021.

Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **note** that the Social Cohesion Cabinet paper and engagement material have been updated to reflect agency and Ministerial feedback received through the consultation period of 7 – 12 May 2021
- 2 **agree** for the Ministry of Social Development to work with your office to lodge the updated Cabinet paper by 12 noon on 14 May 2021 for the Social Wellbeing Cabinet Committee meeting on 19 May 2021

Agree / Disagree

Molly Elliott
General Manager
Social Development Child and Youth Policy

Date

Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan
Associate Minister for Social Development and
Employment

Date

Approach to building social cohesion and public engagement

- 2 The Cabinet paper seeks endorsement to your proposed approach to delivering on the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the attack on the Christchurch masjidain recommendations to strengthen social cohesion. You are seeking agreement to:
 - 2.1 Engage with communities to create a strategic framework based on a shared understanding of social cohesion that is focused on what unites us as people in New Zealand
 - 2.2 Build on the Government's existing work programme through tangible government actions in the short, medium, and long-term to improve social cohesion
 - 2.3 Identify how to support and enable communities, the business sector, the cultural sector, and central and local government to undertake actions to strengthen social cohesion.
- 3 The engagement process and timeframes for this work will be aligned with the Ministry of Justice's engagement on the Incitement of Hatred and Discrimination proposals.
- 4 The social cohesion engagement material is appended to the Cabinet paper (Appendix 3) and seeks public feedback on the following four areas:
 - What does social cohesion mean to communities and their picture/s of what Aotearoa New Zealand would look like if social cohesion was improved?
 - How will we know if we are making progress? What changes might we see? What does success look like?
 - What the research says about what works to strengthen social cohesion – this is summarised as the six ways of building social cohesion. We are keen to know whether these six ways resonate with the public and whether there are other things that might work.
 - What actions government should take or support to strengthen social cohesion, and who could be involved in the work?
- 5 Input and feedback from the public will help us to develop an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective on social cohesion, understand community priorities and develop a draft strategic framework and monitoring and evaluation regime.

Summary of feedback

- 6 Your draft Cabinet paper on Government's approach to improving social cohesion and public engagement was circulated for agency and Ministerial feedback from 7 – 12 May 2021.
- 7 Feedback was sought from thirty agencies and two civil society organisations. All agencies supported the content of the Cabinet paper and alignment of engagements with the Ministry of Justice engagements on the Incitement of Hatred and Discrimination.
- 8 A number of agencies requested linkages to their work programmes, highlighting the volume of work going on that will improve social cohesion overtime. Where most relevant we have done this, e.g. the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.
- 9 A summary of key feedback included:
 - 9.1 Hon Minister Little, Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques requested that the work be presented to the Implementation Oversight Advisory Group (IOAG) prior to community engagement starting.

- 9.2 Prime Minister's Office: to link social cohesion to Government priorities. This has been addressed. The Office also mentioned that the June 2022 report-back to Cabinet could be sooner and in two stages. This point was also raised by the National Security Group in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). We propose to address this concern by highlighting that you will contribute to the RCOI report back due at the end of 2021. There are also other opportunities for updating your Ministerial colleagues, e.g. through the regular RCOI Milestone Tracker and quarterly updates to the responsible Ministers for RCOI response.
- 9.3 DPMC National Security Group: to link social cohesion to strengthening resilience to disinformation, propaganda and foreign interference. This has been addressed in the Cabinet paper. The Group also raised that the six ways to improve social cohesion do not have similar weight (in terms of evidence support), and some of the ways may have greater impact than others. The Group also suggested we add a question to the engagement material to test the weight people place on each of the six areas. We have done this.
- 9.4 Te Arawhiti: The agency asked for the reasons for the focus on the 'Involve' pillar of the Public Participation Spectrum, raising that this choice aligns with Te Arawhiti's 'Consult' level of engagement. To address this comment, we have explained the 'Involve' pillar will enable us to engage with more communities during this initial step. We are also working with colleagues at Te Arawhiti to collaborate more closely on engaging with Māori in our next steps. Te Arawhiti also suggested conducting a Treaty Analysis as part of this Cabinet paper. Given the tight timeframes, we cannot do a thorough Treaty analysis at this late stage. However, in the paper we say that where required we will conduct future impact assessments. Te Arawhiti also encouraged us to engage with the National Iwi Chairs Forum as eliminating racism is one of their mutual priorities with the Crown.
- 9.5 Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH): The MCH was supportive of the proposal and discussed it with their Minister. The Minister for Culture and Heritage encouraged them to join the Social Cohesion Officials' Group. We welcomed the opportunity and are following this up with MCH.
- 9.6 The Human Rights Commission (HRC): the HRC requested that we include a statement in the Cabinet paper. We have included their statement verbatim in the consultation section of your Cabinet paper. The HRC initially requested for postponing the engagement due to delayed engagement with tangata whenua.
- 9.7 Office of Children's Commissioner (OCC): OCC feedback was comprehensive. Key recommendations included:
- engaging with Māori, including tamariki and rangatahi Māori
 - extending the engagement timeframes
 - conducting a Child Impact Assessment
 - a specific engagement plan as part of the consultation process
 - providing child-friendly versions of all engagement materials, translating them in different languages, and publishing them in child-friendly resources.
- 9.8 MSD is working to ensure the material will be available in multiple languages and we are exploring alternate formats (including child-friendly). Other key points are addressed in the paper, but we do not propose to extend the timeframes for engagement. This is noted in the paper.

Next steps

- 10 We will work with your Office on any final edits and to have the Cabinet paper lodged by 12 noon on 14 May 2021.

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