



Te Tari Taiwhenua

Local Government Briefing

Hon Rodney Hide
Minister of Local Government

Copy to: Hon John Carter
Associate Minister of Local Government

Title: Aide Memoire on *Royal Commission on Auckland Governance: Initial Government Reaction*

Date: 9 March 2009

Key issues

This aide memoire provides information relating to your Cabinet paper, *Royal Commission on Auckland Governance: Initial Government Reaction*, to be considered at Cabinet's meeting today.

Action sought

Note that you have a paper at Cabinet today on the proposed process for Royal Commission on Auckland Governance report; and
Note the contents of this briefing.

Timeframe

9 March 2009

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone		Suggested first contact
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Caroline Taylor
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Proprietively Released by the Minister of Local Government

Aide memoire on Royal Commission on Auckland Governance: Initial Government Reaction

- Cabinet will consider your paper called *Royal Commission on Auckland Governance: Initial Government Reaction* today at 11.00am.
- Your Cabinet paper was approved for submission to Cabinet by the ad hoc Ministerial Group on 3 March 2009.
- Included is the information you requested on precedents for the time between the receipt and release of Royal Commission reports.

Background

- The previous Government established a Royal Commission on Auckland Governance (the Royal Commission) to address concerns about the governance arrangements for the Auckland region. The Royal Commission is required to report by 31 March 2009. The Royal Commission's Terms of Reference (ToR) are broadly consistent with the Government's goals for local government in Auckland.
- In order to expedite the Government's decision-making, on 16 February 2009 Cabinet authorised an ad hoc Ministerial group to have power to act to develop the policy on the Government's response to the Royal Commission's report with final proposals to be submitted direct to Cabinet for consideration (CAB Min (09) 15/5).

Cabinet paper

- There will be considerable interest in the Royal Commission's report and the Government's reaction to it. For this reason, you have recommended that Cabinet agree to a number of steps to manage the process once the report is received.
- A tight timeframe for considering the Royal Commission's recommendations is proposed to assist any necessary legislative change to be in place by the 2010 local government elections.
- Cabinet Office made one minor change to make it clear that it is the Governor-General who receives the report by 31 March 2009, not the Government.
- You have proposed to Cabinet that it agree to the following actions:
 - on receipt of the Royal Commission's report, the Prime Minister and you will issue a media release thanking the Commissioners, and indicating the Government's timeframe for reacting;
 - on 6 April, you will bring an oral item to Cabinet seeking approval for an initial high-level Government response, a timeframe for further work and communications and stakeholder strategies;
 - around 6 April, the Royal Commission's report to be publicly released along with a media release on the Government's initial high-level decisions. You proposed that this be a carefully managed release with key stakeholders invited to a lock-up presentation on the report by the Royal Commission and on Government decisions; and
 - in late April, you propose to submit a further Cabinet paper on more detailed implementation matters, including whether or not legislation is required.

- To assist in considering the Royal Commission's report, you have recommended that Cabinet agree to criteria for assessing the recommendations. The criteria are whether the recommendations: meet the ToR; meet good governance principles; align with the Government's initiatives; are feasible to implement; and recognise the Treaty of Waitangi.
- There has only been one Royal Commission of Inquiry in recent times. It was the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification. The Commissioners presented their report to the Governor-General on 27 July 2001 and the report was released to the public on 30 July 2001.
- In 2007 there was also the Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct. The Commissioner presented her report to the Government on 26 March 2007 and the Government released the report to the public on 3 April 2007.

Proactively Released by the Minister of Local Government