

# ROYAL COMMISSION FORUM

## Statement of purpose

*(revised in November 2021)*

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### Introduction

The Royal Commission of inquiry into historical abuse in care was ordered in 2018. The Commission is investigating abuse in care in Aotearoa New Zealand and the nature of subsequent responses. Its investigation includes why people were taken into care; what abuse happened and why; and the effects of the abuse. It also includes institutional responses to reports of abuse and what can be done to make Aotearoa's care systems better. The Commission extends special attention to the experiences of Māori, Pacific People and people with disabilities because those communities in care were, and are, disproportionately affected.

### Who we are

Prompted by individuals who had for many years researched and reported on the way the State had treated children and young people entrusted to its care, an independent community-based Royal Commission Forum (RCF) was set up in 2018.

The Forum exists to monitor and support the work of the Commission, encourage and support widespread participation in the Commission, and offer constructive criticism. In service of this purpose the Forum:

- A. engages with the Royal Commission, government and relevant stakeholders on any issues that could inform, assist or guide the Commission's inquiries
- B. actively encourages survivors of abuse to contribute their views and ideas
- C. advises the Commission, Government agencies and relevant stakeholders so as to enable the timely delivery and positive reception of the Commission's final recommendations
- D. advises the Commission, Government agencies and relevant stakeholders on other matters to enable just survivor-focused outcomes.

### How do we work?

#### Evaluation criteria

1. The Forum seeks to ensure the work of the Royal Commission, government and relevant stakeholders:
  - is survivor-focused
  - enables all survivors to participate as equals and without discrimination
  - hears and gives voice to all survivors as equals and without discrimination
  - is informed by te Tiriti o Waitangi
  - is trauma-sensitive & culturally appropriate

- is accessible to all survivors, including those who confront obstacles to their access.
  - is transparent in its operations
  - is inclusive of both state and faith-based survivors as equals and without discrimination
  - is adequate in scope ensuring that relevant fields of activities or institutions are not excluded arbitrarily
  - enables justice for survivors
  - provides accountability for persons and institutions responsible for abusing people in care
  - operates effectively and in a timely manner
  - demonstrates respect for every person
1. Forum members have a diverse range of experience and expertise. Their approach to their work is eclectic, informed by their experience and the diverse interests they represent and support.
  2. They will be informed by the Commission's Terms of Reference and any other relevant governmental / institutional statement. These may include:
    - (a) the explicitly defined intentions of the Commission
    - (b) any explicitly stated expectations (e.g. of the Government) as to the outcomes of the Commission's work
    - (c) the formally defined scope (e.g. time period) and coverage (e.g. range of populations/activities) of the Commission's inquiries
    - (d) any explicit definition of the way the Commission is required to work and
    - (e) any explicit guidance by the Government on the tone or style of the Commission's and the values it is expected to espouse on such sensitive matters.

#### Use of Forum's judgement

Where the matters in 2. above are not explicit, or the guidance provided is ambivalent, the FORUM members will be informed by views expressed at the 2018 Forum hui and compiled in the subsequent [report](#).

#### Practical aspects of its work

The Forum is a voluntary group that recognises no prior restriction in the scope of its activities in so far as they reasonably serve to monitor and support the work of the Commission, encourage and support widespread participation in the Commission, and offer constructive feedback.

Forum members will use whatever available resources to: attend and observe hearings; monitor the Commission's website and its usage; monitor the responsiveness and supportiveness of the state sector, political leadership, and other agencies such as churches to both the Commission's and survivors' needs for information and records; monitor the style and coverage of the Commission's activities by the news media and other public information outlets and social media; track any published or reported activities of the Commission; report publicly and promptly on these matters to assist the Commission and concerned communities, including the Forum itself.

The Forum will promote participation in the Commission by all survivors as equals and without discrimination.