



28 August 2018

Tēnā koutou katoa, Talofa lava and warm Pacific greetings

Over the past few weeks the Inquiry panel has moved into our deliberations phase in preparation for delivery of our report to Government in late October.

We ended our public engagement programme where we began, with a well-attended community forum on 8 August in Palmerston North, where we had launched our consultation back in April.

Two major submissions representing the views of 1000s of people from around the country have been presented to the panel. A couple of weeks ago panel member Josiah Tualamali’I and I, on behalf of the panel, received a submission signed by over 5,000 people calling for free counselling for all Kiwis. The submission was organised by psychotherapist Kyle MacDonald with the support of Action Station and can be found online at <https://our.actionstation.org.nz/petitions/free-counselling-for-all-kiwi-s-open-submission-to-the-mental-health-review>. After the presentation, Josiah and I enjoyed a lively session with Kyle and Hamish Coleman-Ross for the ‘Nutters Club’ radio show. The video is [here](#)

In late July, Mary O’Hagan, on behalf of Peer Zone and Action Station, presented the panel with the [Wellbeing Manifesto](#) – signed by over 2000 people – at an event in Wellington. We enjoyed hearing about how the manifesto was developed, and were struck by the sense of hope and expectation in the room. You can view the submission at: <https://www.wellbeingmanifesto.nz/>

There have been other collective submissions, collating the views of many people – notably the Changing Minds submission, presenting the voices of 760 people with lived experience and their whanau, following an online survey organised by Taimi Allan and team. You can read the submission [here](#). The PSA Youth Network, the wider PSA and the Council of Trade Unions are among those larger organisations that have submitted on behalf of their respective memberships. Other organisations have proposed particular community-based solutions, including kaupapa Māori and Pacific models of care. Each submission, collective or individual, is an important contribution to our task of ‘hearing the voices of the people’. We appreciate all the effort organisers have put into gathering and presenting such valuable collations of experience and ideas.

We’re grateful for everyone’s input with around 5500 submissions and over 2000 people attending 26 public meetings around New Zealand and engagement with community groups and individuals at numerous other meetings. Our job now is to bring all this information together and shape our views and recommendations for improving mental health and wellbeing in New Zealand. It’s keeping us busy!

My next update will be as we get near the end of the Inquiry and the delivery of our report. On behalf of the panel, thank you for all your work in sharing ideas about what’s working and what isn’t and how we can create a better society for the mental health of all our people. And thanks too for the aroha and encouragement that has lifted our spirits as we undertake this important work.

Ngā mihi

Ron Paterson, Inquiry Chair