

## **Update from the Inquiry Chair**

**23 February 2018**

Tena koutou katoa, Talofa lava and warm Pacific greetings

Welcome to the first update on the work of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction.

This Inquiry is a once in a generation opportunity. Many people called for the Inquiry and will be keenly watching our work and anticipating our final report.

The Inquiry panel met together for the first time on 14 February. It was a good meeting. We bring a wide range of skills and backgrounds, and a shared sense of the importance of the task ahead of us.

The focus of our meeting was on developing a common understanding of the scope of the Inquiry, what we individually and collectively bring to the Inquiry, the values and approaches that will guide our work, and identifying ways to ensure engagement with the broad range of stakeholders. Our values will underpin how we work together, how we engage with people and how we develop our recommendations.

We know we have a big, complex job ahead of us. Our terms of reference are very broad. However, a lot of work and thinking has already been done nationally and internationally. We are determined to tap into this – to learn what's working well, what isn't, where the gaps and the opportunities (especially in prevention and early access) are and, probably most importantly, how can we do things differently and put health and wellbeing back into mental health?

We're keen for the Inquiry to listen widely, build a strong evidence base, and deliver a report with some fresh thinking that is clear, pragmatic and implementable – with a focus on solutions at the national and local level.

We want the Inquiry to generate hope and set a clear direction for the future for our whānau and families, for users of mental health and addiction services, for people working in mental health and addiction, and for the Government.

We want people to be able to see how their ideas and the evidence have been used in developing our recommendations.

We ask you, as individuals or groups, to:

1) help us by sharing your experiences and ideas, particularly focusing on recommendations for how things can be done better and who is best placed to deliver on suggested improvements

2) continue to implement changes that are already underway – we don't want things to be on hold until October!

I aim to provide an update every month, so you can follow the progress of the Inquiry and know when and how you can be involved.

We aim to release a consultation document by the end of March / early April and to have public forums and hui in May/June. However, we won't wait until then to engage with our communities across Aotearoa, nor should people wait. If you have something to say, we want to hear it. Feel free to contact us by email at [mentalhealthinquiry@dia.govt.nz](mailto:mentalhealthinquiry@dia.govt.nz) and share your views.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Ma te mahi tahi hei oranga mō tātou

**Ron Paterson**

*Inquiry Chair*