



Terms of reference: information for children and young people

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into COVID-19 Lessons Learned is looking at what happened in Aotearoa New Zealand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The reason the Commission is doing this is to help Aotearoa New Zealand be more prepared in case something like COVID-19 happens in the future.

The New Zealand Government tells the Commission what they would like to be investigated by creating a document called the terms of reference. The previous Government created the terms of reference for the Commission in December 2022, and now the current Government would like to make some changes.

Before they make changes, the Government would like to hear feedback from New Zealanders.

The terms of reference

The terms of reference currently ask the Royal Commission to investigate these areas:

- The health response – this includes things like lockdown (when we all had to stay at home), border closures (where only certain people could go in and out of New Zealand) and vaccine mandates (where the Government told everyone of a certain age to get vaccinated against COVID-19).
- How people's needs were met during the pandemic – including how we got food, education, and how businesses could stay open.
- How the Government told everyone what was happening and how people got to make decisions about what happened to them.

The Commission is allowed to look at anything in these categories that took place up to October 2022.

There are some things that the Royal Commission currently isn't allowed to investigate, like the general election, how the vaccine works, how COVID-19 works, and some other specific Government decisions.

Sharing your feedback

The current Government would like feedback from New Zealanders about the following topics that could be investigated by the Inquiry.

- Use of multiple lockdowns;
- Vaccine procurement and efficacy;
- The social and economic impacts on both regional and national levels;
- Whether the decisions made, and steps taken, were justified;
- The cost-effectiveness of the Government's policies, and whether the rules set by the Government appropriately balanced COVID-19 elimination with other goals;
- The Government's utilisation of partnerships with business and professional groups;
- The extent of disruption to New Zealanders' health, education and business as a result of the Government's policies;
- If the Government's response was consistent with the rule of law;
- How New Zealand's pandemic preparedness compared to other countries.

You can tell the Government if you think those specific topics should be investigated by filling out the terms of reference feedback form at www.covid19inquiry.nz.

You can write as much or as little as you like. You can also answer the questions using NZSL, or in te reo Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Hindi, or Chinese.

After you answer those questions, you will be asked some information about you, like your age and where you live. It is up to you whether you answer these questions.

You can take part by filling in the online form here [links].

If you are under 8 years old, please ask your parent or guardian to help you.

Any information you provide will go to the Government to help them decide how they want to change the terms of reference.

Getting help

If you have any questions, you can contact the Inquiry on InquiryintoCOVID-19Lessons@dia.govt.nz.

Thinking and writing about some of the things that happened during the pandemic may be hard for you. If you need support, you can call **Youthline** on 0800 376 633 or free text 234.