

# ***Criminal Cases Review Commission***

**Newsletter #4 – June 2020**

---

## **Kia ora koutou**

We are now only three weeks from the Criminal Cases Review Commission being operational on 1 July and, as with any new organisation starting from scratch, there has been an enormous amount going on to ensure that everything is in place ahead of opening day. Despite the workplace disruption caused by Covid-19 response measures, decision-making and implementation work has continued at a brisk pace since I was last in touch. I will provide you with a summary of the key developments over the past month.

## **Commissioners**

Justice Minister Andrew Little announced details of further appointments to the CCRC after they were signed off by Cabinet on 2 June. A Deputy Chief Commissioner and five Commissioners will join me in making up the Commission and the Board. I am delighted with the quality of the appointments.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner is Paula Rose QSO OStJ, an experienced investigator who is currently on the Parole Board. She has also worked in a number of significant governance roles. The five inaugural Commissioners are Kingi Snelgar, a criminal defence lawyer and youth advocate, based in Manukau City and also has a background in te ao Māori and tikanga Māori; Tangi Utikere JP, Deputy Mayor of Palmerston North and someone with wide experience in his community and the criminal justice sector; Nigel Hampton CNZM OBE QC, a vastly experienced lawyer with a background which includes dealing with miscarriage of justice cases and whose work has involved not only local but also international experience; Professor Tracey McIntosh, a Professor of Indigenous Studies and Co-Head of Te Wānanga o Waipapa at the University of Auckland, and Chief Science Advisor for the Ministry of Social Development; and Dr Virginia Hope MNZM, a pre-eminent health scientist who has worked in universities and research institutes, and is currently Medical Director, Health Group, at the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR).

You can read more about the appointees [here](#) in the Minister's media statement.

I have no doubt that we have a Commission with the skills and experience to handle the CCRC's principal function of investigating and reviewing convictions and sentences and deciding whether or not to refer them back to an appeal court. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who applied for Commissioner roles. We had 80 applications and it was a tough job determining the short-list, such was the quality of the people who put themselves forward. It is always the case, when there is a strong interest in a limited number of positions, that very good applicants will unfortunately miss out.

## The Budget

The 14 May Budget was dominated as you would expect by the Government's response to the economic chaos caused by the pandemic. But included in Vote Justice was confirmation that we have the funding we need to be operational from 1 July. Budget 2020 allocated the CCRC a total of \$15.948m over four years from Vote Justice, which is very welcome news as we progress decision-making about the resources we need to get up and running. The commentary accompanying the appropriation described the CCRC's investigative and referral powers as an additional check and balance which will help build public confidence in the justice system.

## Hamilton office

We signed a lease agreement *with Tainui Holdings Ltd* for an office in Alma St, Hamilton, last month, and have started the fitout, security and technology infrastructure requirements since then. The property is on track to be ready for the 1 July launch. Basing ourselves in Hamilton reflects a desire to highlight our independence by operating at arm's length from government and away from the major judicial centres in Auckland and Wellington.

## Website

The CCRC's website [www.ccrcc.nz](http://www.ccrcc.nz) is now available and I encourage all of you to visit the site and familiarise yourselves with the CCRC's set-up and how we will work. It has a broad sweep of information and resources, including of course the application form for those seeking a review of their conviction or sentence. I am pleased with the look and feel of the website. We will refresh the site ahead of our launch on 1 July as there is some content still being developed. Feel free to provide us with any feedback you have on the website, as we will be looking to make continual improvements.

As always, please forward this newsletter to anyone who you think may be interested. If you no longer wish to receive it, please let us know by contacting the email address above.

Ngā mihi nui,

Colin Carruthers QC  
Chief Commissioner, Criminal Cases Review Commission

---

**Questions?** Email us at [info@ccrc.nz](mailto:info@ccrc.nz) or write to us at:

Criminal Cases Review Commission  
PO Box 9168  
Waikato Mail Centre  
Hamilton 3240