



Briefing Note: Meeting with the Chair of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	10 February 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1249569
Drafter:	Vicki Soanes	DDI:	04 463 8626
Key Contact:	Belinda Himiona	DDI:	04 463 7022
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide background information on the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO (National Commission) ahead of your meeting with the Chair, Robyn Baker, on 15 February.

Note that during your meeting, the Chair will guide you through a discussion about the work of the National Commission and key areas to note.

Note that broad work programme includes the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and New Zealand's participation in both the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and the upcoming Decade on Indigenous Languages (2022-2031).

Note that you will be asked to consider appointments to the National Commission and have received advice separately from the Strategy Planning and Governance group of the Ministry of Education (Metis 1249147 refers).

Agree that this briefing will be proactively released.

Agree / **Disagree**

Summary

- You have been delegated as Minister responsible for the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).
- The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO undertakes a strategic programme to promote UNESCO's objectives in New Zealand. The National Commission provides the strategic direction for this work and comprises of a Chair and five Commissioners. The work programme is implemented by a Secretariat in the Ministry of Education using a budget allocation through Vote Education.
- The current strategic plan covers the period 2018-2021 and has focused on Oceans for the Wellbeing of People and Planet, Geoparks, Global Citizenship Education, Indigenous Knowledge and Freedom of Responsible Expression.
- You are meeting with Robyn Baker, Chair, New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO at 4.30pm on Monday February 15.
- Ms Baker intends to brief you and have a discussion on the work of the National Commission. Ms Baker recently submitted a six-monthly report on behalf of the National Commission, outlining their activities from June to December 2020.



Belinda Himiona
Group Manager
International Education

10/02/2021



Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

12/02/2021

Overview of the National Commission for UNESCO's work

1. The National Commission provides a visible presence for UNESCO in New Zealand and connects domestic activities with the international organisation within its five mandated areas of science, culture, social and human science, education and communications. The National Commission also leads a range of UNESCO programmes in New Zealand and connects UNESCO's expertise with local stakeholders on key issues.
2. In recent years, the National Commission has established a clear strategic focus and worked across government and civil society to build a strong reputation and add value to domestic priorities. Recent examples of this work include:
 - responding to the Christchurch Mosque attacks through a national Youth Diversity Forum.
 - facilitating the UNESCO Aotearoa/ New Zealand Youth Leaders Group who are recruited from diverse backgrounds and supported to represent their communities and New Zealand in international and domestic activities;
 - increasing the understanding of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in New Zealand, through commissioning five GCED discussion papers from a range of thinkers;
 - ensuring effective New Zealand participation in key international events such as working with Te Taura Whiri on their rangatahi programme for the International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019.
3. The National Commission has also overseen the renewed popularisation of UNESCO programmes including the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which includes four New Zealand cities.

Background

New Zealand was a founding member of UNESCO in 1945

4. UNESCO was established after the Second World War to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences and culture. UNESCO's programmes also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.
5. The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO (the National Commission) was established in 1947 by the then Government to meet its responsibilities as a UNESCO Member State. The role of a National Commission is to ensure the permanent presence of UNESCO in Member States and contribute to the Organisation's efforts to promote international co-operation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.

New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

6. While the UNESCO Charter of National Commissions requires the externally recognised positions of Chair and Secretary General, each Member State's National Commission has discretion on the specific structure, funding and work programme. In New Zealand, the Chair and five Commissioners on the National Commission are appointed by Cabinet on the recommendations of the Minister responsible for the National Commission for UNESCO. The National Commission's Constitution was updated in 2019 and is attached as Annex One.

7. An annual appropriation of \$2.083 million through Vote Education includes \$553,000 for the National Commission's programme and operating costs, including the New Zealand delegation's participation in the biennial General Conference. The remaining \$1.53 million is for New Zealand's annual assessed contribution to UNESCO as a Member State.
8. In addition to implementing a strategic work plan in New Zealand, the National Commission acts as a conduit between New Zealand, the Asia-Pacific regional offices and UNESCO programmes based in Paris. This work includes maintaining effective working relationships with the sub-regional office in Apia and UNESCO's Paris Headquarters and providing advice to Government on UNESCO matters.
9. The Ministry of Education provides Secretariat support to the National Commission, enabling strong connections with New Zealand's education system. The current Secretariat consists of a Secretary General and a Senior Advisor in the International Cooperation and Engagement Team of the International Division of the Ministry. The Ministry provides managerial and administrative support and also contracts a part time Senior Communications Advisor on behalf of the National Commission who is funded from the National Commission's appropriation. The resourcing provided by the Ministry is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and the National Commission.
10. The New Zealand Permanent Delegate to UNESCO is a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official based in the New Zealand Embassy in Paris, with whom the National Commission Secretariat works closely on international UNESCO matters. The current Permanent Delegate is the Deputy Ambassador to France, Nikki Reid.

Membership

11. The current membership of the National Commission is as follows:

Role	Name	City/town	Date of appointment	Expiry of present term
Chair	Ms Robyn Baker	Wellington	13/11/2016	12/11/2022
Education	Professor Carol Mutch	Christchurch	09/07/2018	08/07/2021
Social Sciences	Emeritus Professor Tagaloatele Peggy Dunlop	Wellington	09/07/2018	08/07/2021
Natural Sciences	Dr Geoff Hicks	Wellington	13/11/2016	26/11/2022
Communication and Information	Ms Vanisa Dhiru	Wellington	27/11/2019	26/11/2022
Culture	Dr Dan Hikuroa	Auckland	15/05/2020	14/05/2023

12. The terms of two of the current Commissioners will end in 2021, although both are eligible to be reappointed for a second term. You will be asked to consider these appointments through a separate process, led by the Ministry of Education (Metis 1249127 refers).

Roles and Responsibilities

13. The National Commission meets approximately four times per year. The Chair and Commissioners receive remuneration in accordance with the Cabinet Fees Framework under an assumed commitment of 15 days per year by Commissioners, and 50 days for the Chair.
14. The Chair and Commissioners are appointed based on their expertise in the programme areas of UNESCO. The National Commission also undertakes a governance role, overseeing the budget and work of the Secretariat.
15. The Chair will report to you six-monthly on the National Commission work programme and other issues that may be of interest. You may be asked, from time to time, to engage in its work programme, such as through attendance at events or presentation of awards.
16. As Minister responsible for the National Commission for UNESCO, your regular formal obligations will be to appoint new Members and approve, in association with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the delegation to the biennial UNESCO General Conference.

The National Commission implements a strategic work programme that targets synergies between international and domestic priorities

17. The National Commission's current strategic plan for 2018-2021 has a mission of:

"Connecting Aotearoa-New Zealand to UNESCO and the world by the fostering and sharing of ideas; and contributing to building the knowledge and capabilities needed to ensure a better future for all."

18. In order to realise this mission, the National Commission has identified five strategic priorities for the work programme:
 - Providing a catalyst for New Zealanders to engage in life-long learning and to be innovative and responsible global citizens.
 - Celebrating New Zealand's taonga by connecting our unique indigenous culture, natural heritage and communities with national and international communities.
 - Nurturing and connecting knowledge based on science, traditional knowledge and intercultural dialogue to improve decision making and mutual understanding.
 - Promoting access to information and knowledge that builds respect for justice, law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.
 - Enhancing the impact of UNESCO's work by strengthening relationships and engaging with UNESCO at the national, regional and international level.
19. The National Commission's work programme is organised under five target areas; Global Citizenship Education; Oceans for the Wellbeing of People and Planet; Indigenous Knowledge; UNESCO Global Geoparks and Freedom of Responsible Expression. The National Commission allocates funding to a range of activities,

including a contestable activity fund, minor grants fund and other projects directly driven by the Secretariat.

20. Current major projects include:

- leading New Zealand's response to the UN International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) through for example, a dedicated web presence highlighting New Zealand ocean science;
- working in partnership with Te Taura Whiri on New Zealand's contribution to the upcoming UN International Decade for Indigenous Languages (2022-2031). This partnership saw their Chair, Professor Rawinia Higgins, elected to the Global Taskforce for the Decade;
- providing leadership in global citizenship education (GCED) in New Zealand, connecting domestic activities to the international efforts to reach SDG 4.

21. Youth activities are also woven throughout the programme, led by a group of ten UNESCO Youth Leaders from diverse backgrounds, who are aged between 18 and 25. They act as both advisors to the National Commission and ambassadors of UNESCO's mandate, and are paid a modest honorarium from the National Commission's budget.

UNESCO Contestable Activity Fund

22. The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO undertakes a contestable funding round each year to enable organisations and individuals to apply for funding to support initiatives that align with its strategic objectives. There are two categories - 'major' (for grants between \$15,000 and \$40,000) and 'minor' (for grants up to \$5,000). Applications for minor grants are accepted throughout the year to enable a degree of flexibility as opportunities arise for New Zealanders to engage with UNESCO work locally, regionally and internationally.

23. In 2020/21, the National Commission approved funding of five 'major' projects, totalling \$90,000.

Engagement with the Pacific

24. The constitution of the National Commission notes as one of its functions 'to assist the Pacific sub-region to derive full benefit from its engagement with UNESCO'. The National Commission works closely with the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States, based in Apia, Samoa, to support the wider work of UNESCO in the region and regularly seeks opportunities to engage.

UNESCO General Conference

25. The General Conference of UNESCO is the biennial general assembly of UNESCO to determine the policy, programme and budget of the organisation. It comprises of a series of meetings held simultaneously over two and a half weeks, consisting of plenary, commissions for each of UNESCO's five programme areas (education, culture, communications, social and natural sciences), and side events. General Conferences are attended by a majority of the 193 Member States and 11 Associate

Member States of UNESCO, including the 17 UNESCO Member States in the Pacific sub-region.

26. The Secretariat of the National Commission is responsible for co-ordinating New Zealand's delegation to the UNESCO General Conference in consultation with the National Commission and its Associate Members (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and government agencies with mandates relevant to UNESCO's five programme areas, including the Ministry of Education.) The delegation is approved by the Minister responsible for the National Commission of UNESCO, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
27. The 40th UNESCO General Conference took place in Paris from 12th to 27th November 2019. Also taking place on the margins were the 11th UNESCO Youth Forum and the 6th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions.
28. New Zealand's country statement was jointly delivered by Chair Robyn Baker and Youth Leader Ashlee Peacock. The themes included the importance and relevance of the Christchurch Call to UNESCO, the outcomes of the Christchurch Youth Diversity Forum, and the importance of UNESCO's presence in the Pacific.
29. The 41st UNESCO General Conference is tentatively scheduled for November 2021, however whether the meeting will take place in person or virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be established closer to the time.

National Commission Chair

30. Robyn Baker ONZM has been Chair of the National Commission for UNESCO since 2016. She is in her second and final three-year term on the Commission.
31. During her time as Chair, Ms Baker has overseen the development of clear policies and strategic planning, a National Commission for UNESCO charter, and refinement of the Constitution. She has successfully led the New Zealand delegation to the biennial UNESCO General Conference in Paris twice, in 2017 and 2019.
32. Ms Baker's short biography is included as Annex Two.

Proactive Release

33. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

Annex One: New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO Constitution

Annex Two: Biography of National Commission Chair, Robyn Baker, ONZM

Annex One: New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO Constitution

CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO (TE KOMIHANA MATUA O AOTEAROA MO UNESCO) (as amended October 2019)

PREAMBLE

The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO is established under Article VII of the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). It operates in accordance with the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO adopted by the 20th session of UNESCO's General Conference and other relevant decisions of the General Conference.

National Commissions ensure the permanent presence of UNESCO in Member States and contribute to the Organisation's efforts to promote international co-operation in the fields of Education, Natural Sciences, Culture, Social and Human Sciences and Communication and Information.

ARTICLE 1

1. The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO shall comprise a Chair and up to five Commissioners appointed by the Minister of Education, with:
 - (i) background and knowledge of all the areas of UNESCO's mandate namely, Education, Natural Sciences, Culture, Social and Human Sciences and Communication and Information
 - (ii) adequate governance and management experience
 - (iii) a strong Māori perspective and gender balance.
2. In deciding on membership of the Commission, the Minister will take into account nominations submitted by the Commission's Associate Members and Co-operating Agencies.

ARTICLE 2

The term of office of the Chair and members of the Commission shall be 3 years, except where a shorter term is agreed upon between the appointee and the Minister.

Members of the Commission are eligible for reappointment, except that no member may be reappointed after six years of consecutive service on the Commission.

The Minister retains the right to annul the appointment of a Commission member.

When a member's term expires, that member, unless vacating or being removed from office, shall continue to hold office until he or she is either reappointed or replaced.

In the event of the resignation or death of a member of the National Commission, the Chair of the Commission may recommend to the Minister a person to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the departed member's term.

ARTICLE 3

The functions of the Commission shall be:

1. to advise the government and its agencies on all matters relating to UNESCO and on any matters referred to it by the Minister, including the composition of New Zealand's delegations to UNESCO's General Conference and other UNESCO meetings
2. to serve as a first point of contact for UNESCO in New Zealand and to undertake a programme of activities which promotes UNESCO objectives in New Zealand
3. to act as a conduit for contributing New Zealand leadership and expertise to the work of UNESCO and to represent New Zealand's views and positions on UNESCO-related matters
4. to facilitate the engagement with UNESCO of New Zealand's government agencies and non-governmental organisations, institutions and individuals, including through funding support and the establishment of sectoral sub-commissions and networks
5. to provide a governance structure and strategic direction for the work of the National Commission
6. to approve an annual work plan and budget
7. to report progress to the Minister at six monthly intervals
8. to assist with the recruitment and appointment of suitably qualified New Zealanders to UNESCO positions internationally
9. to assist the Pacific sub-region to derive full benefit from its engagement with UNESCO.

ARTICLE 4

A quorum at any Commission meeting shall be 4 members, including the Chair.

In the absence of the Chair, a member of the Commission will be designated by the Chair to preside over the meeting as Acting Chair.

In the event of a tied vote on any matter, the Chair or Acting Chair will have a casting as well as a deliberative vote.

ARTICLE 5

The following government agencies or their successor agencies shall have the right to associate membership of the National Commission: the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Science, Innovation, and International Group in the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment; the Ministry for Culture and Heritage; the Ministry for the Environment; the Department of Conservation; the Ministry for Pacific Peoples; the Ministry for Women; Te Puni Kōkiri; the Ministry of Youth Development; the Office of Ethnic Communities; and the Office for Disability Issues.

As Associate Members, these agencies are entitled to receive relevant papers relating to meetings of the Commission; to attend Commission meetings (with speaking rights but no voting rights); and to submit to the Commission nominations for membership of the Commission and proposals for action on any matter within UNESCO's mandate.

ARTICLE 6

New Zealand organisations and institutions with an interest in UNESCO shall be entitled to apply for Co-operating Agency status with the National Commission.

The Commission is authorised to approve such applications, provided that it is satisfied that the purposes of the organisation or institution are in harmony with the purposes and values of UNESCO and that it has significant regional or national responsibilities.

Co-operating Agencies shall be entitled to submit nominations for membership of the Commission and proposals for action on any matters within UNESCO's mandate.

ARTICLE 7

The Government shall:

- (i) furnish the Commission with Secretariat support through Vote:Education. This includes the appointment of a Secretary General.
- (ii) subject to appropriation, provide finance through Vote:Education to meet the costs of New Zealand's annual subscription to UNESCO, the National Commission's programme activities and the National Commission's operating costs, including its participation in UNESCO's biennial General Conference and other UNESCO meetings.

Annex Two: Biography of Chair Robyn Baker, ONZM

Ms Baker's career has been in the field of education where she has contributed as a teacher, researcher, curriculum developer, teacher educator and leader. Ms Baker has considerable experience of governance, as a senior manager working to a board and as a governor. She was the Director and CEO of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research from 2000 to 2014 and was a member of the Board of the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) from 2006-2019. She was the Deputy Chair for six of these years and served on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Over the past six years Ms Baker has undertaken a range of work in the education sector, including Programme Director for the Curriculum Enhancement Programme, University of Waikato and work for the Ministry of Education in the area of curriculum development, supporting the work of Kāhui Ako and providing options for future curriculum. She was the Chair, Expert Advisory Group for the development of a Leadership Strategy for the Teaching Profession, Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, and led the writing of the leadership strategy.

Ms Baker led the management of the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative from 2003 to 2014 and was the Chair of the selection and monitoring panels for the Teacher-led Innovation Fund from 2015-2019. This fund was one aspect of the government's Investing in Educational Success policy that provided funds for teachers to investigate new and innovative practices that have the potential to improve student learning.

As a science educator Ms Baker has been involved in many national developments, including science curriculum and environmental education initiatives. She was a member of the Royal Society Council 1997-2002 and more recently chaired its Education Committee.

