

DRAFT – NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

Chief Science Advisor Forum

Purpose

The purpose of the forum is to:

- Advance the use of science to benefit New Zealand through promoting the use of evidence to inform policy development, practice and evaluation.
- Create a community of practice for independent science advisors across government.
- Ensure that the work of the PMCSA includes important questions relevant to Māori.
- Include Mātauranga Māori and Kaupapa Māori approaches as part of the evidence base.
- Contribute to the government's processes around risk identification and management.
- Act as a conduit for alerts from the scientific and research communities to administration and government.
- Promote a co-ordinated whole of government approach to science advice.
- Ensure that advice from DSAs and the PMCSA is made with a full awareness of current projects, plans and initiatives in science, research and technology that may impact on that advice.
- Co-ordinate advice where appropriate.
- Allow for the peer review of advice.
- Highlight or raise issues of potential importance to members of the forum and the PMCSA.

Membership

Membership of the forum will primarily be drawn from Departmental Science Advisors who typically:

- Add strength to the forum by contributing to a diverse range of skills, insights and thinking across government.
- Are contracted or seconded to a Ministry/Department/Agency to provide independent science advice across a range of topics within a portfolio of Ministerial/Departmental/Agency activity.
- Report directly to the Chief Executive of their Ministry/Department/Agency, although may report to another senior manager in larger ministries that encompass a number of ministerial portfolios.
- Be part-time in their role with the Ministry/Department/Agency, and remain embedded within research communities to ensure the retention and relevance of their specialist skills and expertise as well as on-going developments in their field

The CSAF may invite additional members in order to:

- Assist the forum in its understanding of te Ao Māori and te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Fill strategic gaps.
- Provide a diversity of viewpoints.
- Assist on particular work streams or projects

Advice

The CSAF is a forum for discussion across Ministries/Departments/Agencies and may also provide its views to the PMCSA.

On occasion there will be not be consensus and dissenting views will be respected.

Commitments to activities or actions that may impact on DSA work programmes may require agreement from Chief Executives.

A member may remove themselves from a discussion, e.g. if this conflicts with their employment contract. This will be respected and recorded.

Activities

The CSAF will typically meet monthly, and will operate transparently, with a summary of the discussions recorded, and a summary of the discussions informing parts of the PMCSA's annual report.

Meetings will typically be convened by the PMCSA.

The CSAF will:

- Collectively stay abreast of activities and advice streams across government relevant to science advice.
- Have an understanding of how advice streams map onto cabinet priorities.
- Provide cross-sector advice to Ministries where appropriate.
- Co-ordinate advice streams, where appropriate.
- Peer review activities of its members, as required.
- Act as a sounding board for the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor.

Expectations

The CSAF expects its individual members to maintain confidentiality of the discussions, respect the professional and contractual relationship of their fellow forum members with Ministries/Departments/Agencies and Ministers. This includes the expectation to adhere to the 'no surprises' convention that is to:

- Be aware of the possible implications of their advice, decisions, public statements and actions for wider government policy issues.
- Advise the Forum of issues that may be discussed in public and that may require a DSA, Ministry/Departmental/Agency response, preferably ahead of time.

Conflicts of interest

There is an expectation that Conflicts of Interest will be scrupulously managed. All conflicts of interest, including employment, research activities, research grants, and obligations to employers will be declared. A register of conflicts of interest will be kept, and updated at every meeting as necessary.