

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Chief Science Advisor Forum | He Rauhinga Tohu Putaiao

Purpose

The purpose of the Chief Science Advisor Forum (CSAF) is to:

- Create a community of practice for independent science advisors across government.
- Support the use of robust science to benefit Aotearoa New Zealand through promoting the use of evidence to inform policy development, practice and evaluation.
- Act as a conduit for emerging opportunities and risks from the scientific and research communities to administration and government.
- Promote a co-ordinated whole of government approach to science advice.
- Co-ordinate advice where appropriate.
- Ensure that advice from Departmental Science Advisors (DSAs) and the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor (PMCSA) is provided with a full awareness of current projects, plans and initiatives in science, research and technology that may impact on that advice.
- Assist with the peer review of advice for its members, when requested.
- Highlight or raise issues of potential importance to members of CSAF and the PMCSA.

Aims

The CSAF aims to:

- Provide a point of connection to bridge research communities and government.
- Champion the use of evidence in informing government policies.
- Promote coordination and reduce duplication of science advice mechanisms.
- Support increased diversity in the science and science advisory system.
- Support Ministries/Departments/Agencies to create roles for Māori science and mātauranga advisors.
- Support the work of the OPMCSA to address Māori priorities.
- Support the inclusion of mātauranga Māori and kaupapa Māori approaches as part of the evidence base.
- Contribute to the government's processes around addressing the needs of minority groups in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Contribute to the government's processes around risk identification and management.
- Seek to identify areas where CSAF members can usefully collaborate.

Membership

Membership of the CSAF, will primarily be drawn from Departmental Science Advisors. Members will typically:

- Add strength to the CSAF by bringing to a diverse range of networks, skills, insights and an ability to think broadly and strategically across government.
- Be contracted or seconded to a Ministry/Department/Agency to provide independent science advice and connectivity to the research community.
- 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, as appropriate.

Roles may be full or part-time in their role with the Ministry/Department/Agency, and may be directly employed by the Ministry/Department/Agency or remain embedded within research communities and seconded into the role.

The PMCSA, in consultation with the CSAF, may invite additional guests, project members or annually co-opted CSAF members to:

- Contribute to addressing strategic gaps in Ministry/Department/Agency science advice support.
- Provide a diversity of viewpoints.
- Assist the CSAF
- in its understanding of te Ao Māori, mātauranga Māori and te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Contribute to particular work streams or projects.

CSAF member (including co-opted CSAF members) and guests must agree to the expectations as detailed below.

The current membership of the CSAF will be shared on the [PMCSA website](#).

Activities

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

There will not always be a consensus and dissenting views will be heard and respected.

Activities will contribute to supporting the purpose of the forum. Routinely, forum-subgroups or individually led activities will be carried out collaboratively. If such activities lead to a published output, this would typically attribute authors at their Ministry/Departmental/Agency address, or occasionally from another professional address. Pan-forum work streams will be acknowledged as a CSAF project and where appropriate the output may be published on the PMCSA website. This will require approval of the PMCSA and consultation of the CSAF.

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

Meetings

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.

Expectations

The CSAF expects its individual members and guests to maintain confidentiality of the CSAF discussions, and respect the professional and contractual relationship of their fellow forum members with Ministries/Departments/Agencies and Ministers.

The CSAF will manage its conflicts scrupulously and transparently. A member will remove themselves from a discussion where they have a conflict or a perceived conflict. This will be respected and recorded.

The CSAF address may only be used with permission of the PMCSA after consultation with the CSAF. This permission must be sought for each individual address use.

It is expected that all CSAF activities are subject to the government code of conduct requiring no surprises.*

This includes advising relevant Ministries and Minister's offices in a timely fashion in advance of any public announcement. As a courtesy, we recommend that a no surprise disclosure is in place for all outputs that have included input from the CSAF members from all addresses. The expectations around the government code of conduct requiring no surprises can be nuanced and complex, the OPMCSA can provide support and advice in this area.

The CSAF members will:

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

Register of Interests

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, shared on the [PMCSA webpage](#) and updated at every meeting as necessary.

* 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 PMCSA (and where appropriate CSAF, Ministry/Departmental/Agency or Minister(s)), ahead of time, of issues that may be discussed in the public domain and that may require a CSAF, DSA, PMCSA, Ministry/Departmental/Agency or Minister response. Each CSAF member is responsible for managing their own 'no surprises' in a professional and timely manner.