

**Election Access Fund**  
**Te Tomokanga — Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga**  
**Applications Panel Meeting**

**Date:** 27 November 2023  
**Time:** 11:00 am-12:00 pm  
**Location:** Online via Zoom  
**Chair:** Dianne Glenn  
**Members:** Huhana Hickey  
Robbie Watene  
Jade Farrar  
Leigh Deuchars, Electoral Commission  
**Other attendees:** Charmaine James (Secretariat)  
Chantelle Griffiths (Senior Advisor – Election Access Fund)  
**Apologies:** None

**Minutes**

The meeting started with a Karakia lead by Huhana. The minutes were adopted with no changes and approved by (Dianne/Huhana).

**Update from Electoral Commission Staff**

General update:

Leigh gave a general update on the progress of the EAF

Huhana expressed her view and disappointment about the lack of profiling, promotion or clear visibility of the candidate's campaign by political parties.

Jade agreed with Huhana and expressed his opinion that the fund should be opened to applications sooner if not now, prompting the development of candidates to the run up to the next election to aid development of the future disability candidates for the next election period. He also expressed that opening in the year that election was run was a mistake and should have been sooner.

Interpretation of the legislation vs policy changes:

Leigh acknowledged that questions and testing by the panel members played a valuable role in testing the policy document which had been drafted in the absence of a similar fund to base it off. Adjustments to the policy were approved by the Steering Group, which included Whaikaha representation.

Huhana agreed with the process used to develop the EAF but again felt that the level of educating the political parties would need to be increased in future. Both Jade and Huhana expressed the need for the fund to be matched with a more considered effort from political parties to profile and promote their disability candidates so they are more visible to the public.

The panel discussed whether applicants would be comfortable identifying themselves and sharing their stories. They also discussed what can be done to help in the next election and if this fund could be recommended to support local body elections.

### Funds granted vs returned:

The following was noted:

Funds granted and paid out to applicants - \$45,349.15

Unused funds to be returned - \$18,965.45

### Evaluation Process:

Leigh took the panel through the Evaluation Framework document. She stated that Ministry of Justice will be performing their Evaluation of the fund on behalf of the Minister. This would take a broader view of the fund set up and what changes might be made. Together with this the Electoral Commission will also be drafting their own evaluation of the fund to accompany the GE23 review. The EAF team are working with MoJ to try and balance how the interviews will be done and how we can minimize duplication of questions and interviews and be most effective and less of an imposition to those being interviewed.

The panel asked about making recommendations around extending the fund to local government elections. Leigh indicated that this sort of recommendation could be made by the panel when interviewed by MOJ.

### Next Steps:

As per legislation, the Election Access Fund needs to be available for by-elections. It was noted that the panel member's contract term comes to an end on 31 Dec 2023. Leigh will email the panel members separately about how we can work in the eventuality of one.

### General matters:

Leigh and Charmaine brought to the panel's attention the Official Information Act Request received for the Election Access Fund on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2023, requesting copies of the panel meeting minutes, total sum the panel members have been paid for their services as well as declarations of interest. The information has been gathered and a response drafted to respond to the request.

Dianne asked if the panel could have feedback on the evaluation once it is completed and if the members could add their personal views of the fund.

Dianne requested that the panel members send through their pay claims to the Electoral Commission for payment as soon as possible to wrap up any outstanding administration.

### **Closing**

Huhana closed off the meeting with the Karakia.

### **Next meeting**

No further meetings have been set.