

## Appointment of Co-Directors of He Whenua Taurikura National Centre of Research Excellence

The appointment process of the Co-Directors of the He Whenua Taurikura National Centre of Research Excellence for preventing and countering violent extremism (the Centre) was led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) as the lead agency for the establishment of the Centre. To ensure the independence of the Centre, no Government Ministers were involved in the selection and appointment process.

Applications for the role opened on Friday 24 September 2021 and closed on Sunday 10 October 2021. A total of 28 applications were received during this initial period, including late applications.

An initial selection panel was convened by DPMC to shortlist and interview applicants:

- Andy George (Counter-Terrorism Strategic Coordinator, DPMC, Chair)
- Julia Macdonald (Principal Policy Advisor, DPMC)
- Distinguished Professor Paul Spoonley (Massey University)
- Professor Joanna Kidman (Victoria University of Wellington)

### Phase I

Six applicants were shortlisted based on the criteria set out in the position description and interviewed by the panel in November 2021. Of these, one was determined by the panel as the preferred candidate for appointment and invited for a second interview. Based on that interview, the preferred candidate was verbally informed that they would be appointed to the role, subject to referee checks and other due diligence. The other five candidates who were interviewed were not considered to fully meet the required criteria and were informed that their applications would not be taken further.

During this process, in discussion with all of the interviewed candidates and based on models successfully used by a number of similar Centres, a model of appointing Co-Directors was agreed by DPMC and the selection panel. This was communicated to, and agreed to, by the preferred candidate during the second interview.

### Phase II

Once initial interviews were completed, and a Co-Director model agreed, Professor Kidman expressed interest in being considered for the position and submitted an application for the role of co-Director. Once her application was received, she was immediately removed from the selection panel and played no further part in any selection decisions. This was to ensure her application could be fairly considered and address any conflicts of interest.

A separate selection panel was convened by DPMC to consider Professor Kidman's application:

- Andy George (DPMC, Chair)
- Julia Macdonald (DPMC)
- Distinguished Professor Paul Spoonley (Massey University)
- Dr Lindsey MacDonald (University of Canterbury)

Professor Kidman was subject to the same rigorous appointment processes as other applicants. She was interviewed and agreed by the selection panel as suitable for appointment for the position of Co-Director. Professor Kidman was informed that she would be appointed, subject to referee checks and other due diligence. These were subsequently completed.

### Phase III

During the due diligence process for the other preferred candidate for appointment, additional information came to light relating to them and their suitability for appointment. A further (third) interview to discuss these aspects was held with this candidate, with the following panel:

- Andy George (DPMC, Chair)
- Tony Lynch (Deputy Chief Executive, DPMC)
- Julia Macdonald (DPMC)
- Distinguished Professor Paul Spoonley (Massey University)

Following this interview, the selection panel determined that this candidate was not suitable for appointment, and they were informed of this decision.

Professor Kidman was therefore the only candidate from the 29 applicants (the original 28 plus her later application) to have met the criteria for appointment. She has been appointed for a three-year term.

At this stage, DPMC determined that the decision on appointing a long-term Co-Director to work alongside Professor Kidman should be determined by the Centre's Governance Board once this is established, rather than DPMC starting the process again.

Distinguished Professor Spoonley was verbally requested by DPMC to work as an interim Director for up to a year, to work alongside Professor Kidman in establishing the Centre. A full-time Director to replace Distinguished Professor Spoonley will be appointed by the Governance Board during this period.

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## **Job advert – Director, He Whenua Taurikura: National Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (3 Year Fixed Term or Secondment)**

- Does establishing and leading a pioneering research institute motivate you?
- Are you passionate about protecting Aotearoa New Zealand from terrorism and violent extremism?
- Can you communicate complex and challenging issues to a diverse audience?

We have a unique and exciting opportunity to make a real impact on research and policy that aims to keep all New Zealanders safe and secure.

### **Ko wai mātou | About us**

A new government-funded research institution, He Whenua Taurikura: National Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism is seeking a senior leader to be its inaugural Centre Director. This exciting and challenging role will be fundamental to the establishment and leadership of the Centre.

The Centre will bring together research organisations and institutes, civil society organisations, and government to research preventing and countering violent extremism, with a focus on understanding diversity and promoting social cohesion. This will inform public discussion and guide the work of policy agencies across government.

### **Mō tēnei tūranga mahi | About this role**

The core functions of this role include:

- Development and implementation of the Centre's strategic plan
- Providing intellectual leadership and ensuring quality and relevance of Centre outputs
- Representing the Centre and building strong and effective partnerships
- Building the Centre's culture and approach
- Overall management of operations
- Chairing the Advisory Group on Counter-Terrorism

### **Ko wai koe | About you**

We welcome applicants from all backgrounds - creating a diverse and inclusive workforce, that reflects the communities we serve, and will help us to deliver effectively for New Zealand.

The ideal candidate will have recognised mana across the field of preventing and countering violent extremism, with strong academic credentials. They will also have experience in managing a research centre or institution.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate the following:

- A PhD or equivalent knowledge relating to the Centre's purpose
- Experience in building and managing meaningful relationships and partnerships
- Experience in managing nationally-significant organisations or research programmes
- Experience as a spokesperson or in a senior public-facing role
- Demonstrable commitment to tangata whenua and tangata tiriti partnership

### **Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi**

He Whenua Taurikura is committed to upholding the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. An understanding of te Tiriti principles and experience applying these in previous roles is desirable.

### **Ta matou e tuku | What we offer**

This is a full-time three year fixed-term or secondment appointment (with the possibility of extension), though potentially part time subject to the successful applicant's circumstances. Salary will be competitive, commensurate with experience.

We pride ourselves on the quality of our staff and understand the importance of fostering a working environment where excellence is recognised and where staff are encouraged to develop their own talents and potential. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds - creating a diverse and inclusive workforce, that reflects the communities we serve, will help us to deliver effectively for New Zealand. This role is flexible by default and a positive work life balance is encouraged.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) is the lead agency working on the establishment of He Whenua Taurikura, which will be supported and contributed to by government but operate independently. The Director will be employed directly by He Whenua Taurikura rather than DPMC, and report to the Centre's Governance Board once established.

### **Me pēhea te tono | How to apply**

Applications close midday 10 October 2021. We will be reviewing applications for this position as they are submitted and may commence interviews with suitable candidates prior to the application period closing.

If you have any questions regarding the role, please contact [HWT@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:HWT@dpmc.govt.nz).

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