



Pike River Royal Commission

21 March 2011

EXPLANATORY NOTE - THE COMMISSION'S PRELIMINARY HEARING ON 5 APRIL 2011

Summary

The Pike River Commission of Inquiry will hold a preliminary hearing on 5 April in Greymouth to outline the procedures it proposes to follow. The procedures will be finalised after any comments have been received.

Evidence from witnesses will be heard in later hearings.

The Commission proposes to hold 15 weeks of hearings in Greymouth over the period 6 May to 4 November. The hearings will be organised into 4 phases:

- Phase 1 Context
- Phase 2 Search and Rescue
- Phase 3 What happened at Pike River?
- Phase 4 Policy Aspects

The Commission will seek:

- a) to establish what happened at the Pike River Mine and why
- b) to identify what can be done to avoid future tragedies.

Introduction

The Commission has issued detailed information to counsel and others preparing for its preliminary hearing on 5 April. It explains the procedures the Commission proposes to follow but gives counsel and others the opportunity to comment before they are finalised.

Information Issued

The information issued covers:

1 *The procedures that the Commission intends to adopt to facilitate its inquiries*

The suggested procedures are based on the fact that the Commission is conducting an inquiry. It is not conducting a trial of anyone. Nor is it investigating whether anyone might face prosecution for breach of the law - that is a matter for the Police and the Department of Labour.

2 *The standing allocated to people who have expressed an interest in being represented at the Commission or in making submissions to it.*

Following expressions of interest the Commission has provisionally allocated one of 3 levels of standing:

Group 1: parties to the inquiry who are entitled to appear and be heard

Group 2: persons who are also entitled to appear and be heard, often in relation to some specific part of the inquiry

Group 3: witnesses or submitters who are likely to have evidence of value to the Commission.

This does not preclude the Commission obtaining evidence from other people.

Any objections to the Commission's classification will be dealt with at the preliminary hearing.

3 *The hearings*

The Commission intends to conduct its public hearings in 4 broad phases:

Phase 1 Context

23 May to 3 June (2 weeks)

Phase 2 Search and Rescue

4 July to 22 July (3 weeks)

Phase 3 What happened at Pike River?

8 August to 2 September (4 weeks)

12 September to 7 October (4 weeks)

Phase 4 Policy aspects

25 October to 4 November (2 weeks)

4 A provisional list of the issues on which the Commission intends to focus

The provisional list of issues is as comprehensive as we can make it at this early stage. It is likely to be amended as the Commission's inquiries proceed. It is organised under the 4 phases of hearings.

Attachments

1. Minute for Preliminary Hearing

([http://pikeriver.royalcommission.govt.nz/vwluResources/Minute%20for%20Preliminary%20Hearing/\\$file/Minute-for-Preliminary-Hearing.pdf](http://pikeriver.royalcommission.govt.nz/vwluResources/Minute%20for%20Preliminary%20Hearing/$file/Minute-for-Preliminary-Hearing.pdf))

2. Standing Allocated to Persons who have expressed an Interest

([http://pikeriver.royalcommission.govt.nz/vwluResources/Schedule%201/\\$file/Schedule-1-standing-of-parties-and-others.pdf](http://pikeriver.royalcommission.govt.nz/vwluResources/Schedule%201/$file/Schedule-1-standing-of-parties-and-others.pdf))

3. Provisional list of Issues

([http://pikeriver.royalcommission.govt.nz/vwluResources/Provisional%20List%20of%20Issues/\\$file/Provisional-List-of-Issues.pdf](http://pikeriver.royalcommission.govt.nz/vwluResources/Provisional%20List%20of%20Issues/$file/Provisional-List-of-Issues.pdf))

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