

## Election Access Fund

### Te Tomokanga — Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga

#### Applications Panel Meeting

<b>Date:</b>	2 November 2022
<b>Time:</b>	11.00am-12.00pm
<b>Location:</b>	Online via Zoom
<b>Chair:</b>	Leigh Deuchars, Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy Governance and Development, Electoral Commission
<b>Facilitator:</b>	Kath Lys, Senior Project Manager, Electoral Commission
<b>Members:</b>	Jade Farrar Dianne Glenn Huhana Hickey Robbie Watene
<b>Other attendees:</b>	Nil
<b>Apologies:</b>	Nil

## Minutes

### Election Access Fund context

Discussion points:

It was noted that the Fund is legislated to address costs that disabled people face that non-disabled people do not face. It is not designed to alleviate wider barriers experienced by disabled people. However, Panel members will be able to be flexible in their consideration of access needs within the boundaries of the legislation.

As the work progresses different templates or guidance may be able to be developed for different scenarios and groups of needs.

Circumstances will vary greatly, for example those standing as independents may need more support than those supported by a political party. Political parties should be educated to ensure they are supporting disabled candidates and not over relying on the Fund for this purpose.

It was noted that where an applicant underestimates their costs they can come back for more funding.

Some disabled people have greater disadvantage due to colonialism. Article 31 of the Convention covers intersectionality and could be used to inform future processes.

There are some checks and consequences should someone come through the fund with bad intentions. These include requirements to show that a person is seeking selection (via providing correspondence with a party) or standing as a candidate (via providing their public announcement). Applicants are also informed that the Commission reserves the right to appoint an auditor to investigate funding use and in extreme cases may engage a debt collection agency.

There are no requirements for applicants to have a diagnosis or medical proof of impairment. Consultation feedback did not support use of the medical model. Instead, applicants are required to sign a declaration that they meet the definition in the Convention.

The fund and its processes will be evaluated, and this will involve seeking feedback from applicants. It will be useful to collect demographics to understand who has applied.

Not all disabled people are linked in with disability organisations or with political parties. To reach them and raise awareness of the Fund the Commission has a broad media campaign involving social media and other advertising media.

Actions:

- Kath to circulate the powerpoint slides.
- Kath to replace the word “less” with “fewer” on the application form under minimum wage guidance.

### **Application Panel processes**

Discussion points:

The application process should be reviewed from a Māori and Pacific perspective, and ensure it is inclusive of Te Tiriti. Huhana can help facilitate this through Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People.

Kath will send the Assessment Form to the Steering Group for signoff. Panel meeting processes will be finalised in discussion with the Chair.

The Application Form, Assessment Form and other panel processes will be tested as applicants move through the Fund. Panel members are encouraged to observe and give feedback on how things are working in practice so that improvements can be made.

The Panel is able to give advice for applicants to consider, for example where there may be other types of support that they could explore. This can be documented in the Assessment Form or at the meeting and will be passed on by the Commission team.

Panel members are welcome to share information about the Fund as long as Panel business and individual cases are not discussed.

The Communications Team have suggested that short bios of the panel members be provided on the website, as people are interested in who is on the panel.

It would be helpful to have a template and a monthly due date for claims.

Action:

- Kath to send Huhana key documents for forwarding to Whaikaha.
- Panel members to send Kath any other suggested changes to the Assessment Form.
- Panel members to send Kath a one paragraph bio for the Commission's website.
- Kath to add to the Assessment Form a prompt for advice from the Panel to the applicant.
- Kath to advise a due date for invoices and provide a template.

### **Chair and Deputy Chair**

It was agreed that Dianne will be the Chair and Huhana Deputy Chair of the Applications Panel.

Action:

- Kath and Dianne to meet prior to the first regular meeting of the Panel.

### **Next meeting**

9 November - Panel members to meet the Steering Group. Dianne, Jade and Robbie are able to make this time.

21 November - First fortnightly panel meeting. (NB: There will need to be a special meeting before this date in the event of any applications relating to the by-election being held on 10 December.)

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

**Date:** 19 December 2022  
**Time:** 1.00pm-2.30pm  
**Location:** Online via Zoom  
**Chair:** Dianne Glenn  
**Members:** Huhana Hickey  
Robbie Watene  
**Other attendees:** Leigh Deuchars, Electoral Commission  
Kath Lys, Electoral Commission  
**Apologies:** Jade Farrar

## **Minutes**

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were adopted with no corrections (Dianne/Robbie).

Action points completed:

- Kath to circulate the powerpoint slides.
- Kath to replace the word “less” with “fewer” on the application form under minimum wage guidance.
- Kath to send Huhana key documents for forwarding to Whaikaha.
- Panel members to send Kath any other suggested changes to the Assessment Form.
- Panel members to send Kath a one paragraph bio for the Commission’s website.
- Kath to add to the Assessment Form a prompt for advice from the Panel to the applicant.
- Kath to advise a due date for invoices and provide a template.
- Kath and Dianne to meet prior to the first regular meeting of the Panel.

Matters arising:

- To date there has been no feedback on the documents sent to the Māori and Pacific advisory groups at Whaikaha. Huhana reported that they are extremely busy at present.
- Panel members were asked to submit invoices at the end of each month, even if it is for a small amount. This is preferable for the Commission’s finance processes.

## **Update from Electoral Commission staff**

### *Communications:*

Stakeholders including political parties have been emailed to remind them about the Fund and reinforce the message that people can apply more than once. This was in response to feedback that some thought they had to budget for both their selection and campaigning expenses at one time.

Disabled people's organisations have been provided with content for newsletters and social media, and many have shared this.

A paid social media post to advertise the Fund on the Commission's Facebook and Instagram pages was run and will be run again in late January. Negative comments are heavily moderated when these posts are live. Huhana noted that some negative comments also came through Linked In, in response to a positive post from someone who was considering applying.

A printed handbook version of the application guidelines will be sent out to sector stakeholders and political parties in January.

The external media company will be running radio, print and social media advertisements in 2023.

The communications campaign is aimed at getting the balance right between ensuring there is enough advertising to raise awareness and avoiding the perception of over-spending on advertising an initiative that impacts a small number of people.

### *Applications and Enquiries:*

Two applicants have met with Chantelle and are currently pulling their application material together. Hopefully one will be ready for the next panel meeting.

There was an enquiry from someone who is involved in setting up a new political party and may apply later, and another person who asked if the fund would pay for advertising and other campaigning costs. A few others requested support for disability costs but were not standing for Parliament.

### *Application Panel Assessment Form:*

Two additions have been made to the form:

- Guidance on rates for NZSL interpreters and transcribers has been added to the support assistance rates.
- The equipment and technology policy has been added, as the Panel may wish to advise the Commission on individual cases. Although hiring or leasing equipment or technology for the election period is preferred, in a small number of cases it may be

more practical for items to be purchased. Fund recipients will be allowed to keep them except in cases where:

- there could potentially be (or be perceived to be) improper electoral advantage, and/or
- the item has high retail sale potential.

This will generally not be an issue as most equipment will be person specific.

*Overall:*

The project is at the point of completing the last few documents, tidying up filing and creating tools to track and manage enquiries and applications.

Tools and guidance material are being tested with enquirers and applicants.

Evaluation of the development of the fund is underway, as is planning for longer term tasks such as ongoing staffing and the Ministerial review of the Fund post 2023.

***Discussion:***

Dianne shared the Fund's newsletter blurb with Business and Professional Women and will also share with National Council of Women and Pacific Womens Watch. Huhana has promoted on social media and knows of a few people considering applying but feel it is too early at this stage. Some would have applied for local body elections if it had been possible.

Dianne was asked by someone from a local body if they could promote it through local authorities, even though it relates to central government.

For purchased equipment it was suggested that people could be given the opportunity to purchase the item at a reduced rate at the end of the election period. This is not uncommon.

*Action:*

- Kath to send the Fund information for newsletters to panel members.
- Kath to ask the Communications Team whether promoting the fund through local authorities would be helpful.
- Kath to investigate the possibility of selling equipment and technology purchased through the fund back to fund recipients at a reduced rate.

**Any other business**

Invoicing: It is preferable for the Commission's Finance team to receive invoices at the end of each month, even if they are small, so that there is no need for accruals.

**Next meeting**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 1pm

## Election Access Fund

### Te Tomokanga — Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga

#### Applications Panel Meeting

<b>Date:</b>	16 January 2023
<b>Time:</b>	1.00pm-2.30pm
<b>Location:</b>	Online via Zoom
<b>Chair:</b>	Dianne Glenn
<b>Members:</b>	Huhana Hickey Robbie Watene
<b>Other attendees:</b>	Kath Lys, Electoral Commission (Project Manager) Tash Macey, Electoral Commission (Secretariat)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Jade Farrar Leigh Deuchars, Electoral Commission

## Minutes

### Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were adopted with no corrections (Dianne/Robbie).

#### Action points completed:

- Kath to send the Fund information for newsletters to panel members.
- Kath to ask the Communications Team whether promoting the fund through local authorities would be helpful.
  - The Communications Team have advised they won't be doing this as it would give the perception that the fund is available for local body elections and create confusion.
- Kath to investigate the possibility of selling equipment and technology purchased through the fund back to fund recipients at a reduced rate.
  - This is possible. Kath is investigating how this is done and will add the details to the policy.

#### Matters arising:

- Jade will now be the main point of contact for Whaikaha as Huhana has resigned from the groups.
- Panel members have been promoting the fund through their own avenues.
- Huhana advised she will be doing a podcast relating to disabled candidates that will be politically neutral. Kath will let Leigh know, who may contact Huhana to clarify plans.



## **Conflict of Interests**

Nil

## **Applicant 001 \$2593.17**

Recommendation: To approve full amount of \$2593.71

Discussion points:

- Queried whether requested funding is doubled up with other funding sources. This is clarified in the applicant's declaration form which is signed and returned before submission.
- Travel has been confirmed as included in the note taker's quoted rate as they are in the same region as the client. It was also discussed and agreed that meals, travel, and accommodation were valid costs for a support person but not for the candidate.
- It was noted to the panel that the applicant was not born with a disability but has a disability later in life. This was important to know to understand the need for a note taker, as they may not be familiar with other methods of assistance.
- Meals – Discussed whether meal costs were too expensive and whether dinner was also needed on the Saturday evening. Agreed in the context it is appropriate for a note taker to be present during mealtimes for networking, and that the cost of meals is reasonable for this setting and event. Noted that the suggested figures in the Assessment Form appendix are guidelines only and actual costs will depend on individual circumstances and clarification of costs provided.
- A personal assistant may be more beneficial in the long term if the applicant is successful.

*Action:*

- Tash to send the decision document to Leigh for approval before informing the applicant of the outcome.

## **Process improvements**

The following process improvements were identified during discussion of Applicant 001:

- It is important to understand the applicant's disability and relevant circumstances (eg from birth or acquired). More detail is needed.
- Future assessment forms to be formatted with radio boxes to make it easier for panel members.
- In future when a service is listed the quoted figure will be inclusive of any contributions and holiday pay. It is confusing to have these separate. Travel should be clarified (ie be clear if inclusive)
- The sentence about costs covered/not covered by the fund is confusing.

- Agreed that Assessment forms must be sent to Tash by 10am on the meeting day. These will then be collated and sent to all meeting participants to read before the meeting.

*Actions:*

- Tash to format Assessment Form template with radio boxes
- Tash to ensure detail of applicant's circumstances is provided to assist decision making
- Tash to ensure quotes are inclusive of holiday pay/contributions and travel needs are explicit.
- Tash to implement agreed process of submitting and circulating completed assessment forms.
- Kath to reword sentence on costs covered by the fund.

**Update from Electoral Commission staff**

No other enquiries or applications received since the last meeting (19 December). There is one other applicant who is gathering their information and will submit when ready.

**Any other business**

Nil

**Next meeting**

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 1pm.

Note this is Auckland Anniversary Day - Robbie will confirm her attendance closer to the time.

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

**Date:** 24 April 2023  
**Time:** 1.00pm-2.30pm  
**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, Electoral Commission (Senior Advisor)  
**Apologies:** None

## **Minutes**

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were adopted with no corrections (Dianne/Huhana).

Action points completed:

- Charmaine has formatted the Assessment Form template with radio boxes and comment boxes.

Matters arising:

- Huhana advised she is negotiating a podcast series with community radio, focusing specifically on indigenous disability issues that will be politically neutral.
- Jade raised the matter of measuring the funding on precedence or merit on each application for equipment, ensuring that due diligence is followed.

### **Conflict of Interests**

Nil

### **Applicant 001 \$15,011.27**

Recommendation: To approve the partial amount of \$11,597.45 for the support assistant and travel expenses with further review of the budget application for equipment.

Discussion points:

- Queried how many hours the support assistant would need, why there was both vehicle mileage as well as taxi fare budgeted in the application.
- Queried whether the applicant has individualised funding.
- Discussion around the feasibility of purchasing the equipment, and if it would server better to part fund or hire for a period of time.
- Travel budget has been confirmed as either or taxi/support assistant vehicle mileage claim from transporting applicant to/from meetings in the Wellington region.
- Noted that the suggested figures in the Application budget are guidelines only and actual costs will depend on individual circumstances and clarification of costs provided.
- Queried why the candidate with no previous political involvement has been chosen as a candidate but was confirmed by Chantelle that the applicant has had prior exposure to the political environment, extensive mentoring and involvement over the years and gained exposure in an assistive capacity.

- Queried on how payment of the granted fund would be made, it was confirmed that the full approved amount is paid to the candidate, and they will record expenses, report back in the form of an interim and end of funding reports supplemented with receipts and invoices on expenditure and the surplus is recovered once they have completed their candidacy campaign.

*Action:*

- Charmaine to send the decision document to Leigh for approval before informing the applicant of the outcome.

### **Process improvements**

The following process improvements were identified during discussion of Applicant 001:

- It is important to understand the applicant's expose to the political field. More detail is needed.
- Future assessment forms to be drafted as sharepoint/web based forms to make it easier for panel members to complete.
- The sentence about costs covered/not covered by the fund is confusing.

*Actions:*

- Charmaine to investigate converting the panel assessment form to a sharepoint/web based form that will remove the barrier of having panel members download forms, complete and save on personal devices and then forward to the EAF team prior to meetings.
- EAF team to source hiring alternatives for acquiring equipment for next meeting to make a decision on hiring or purchase with possibility of partial payment/token payment to take on the device after campaign.

### **Update from Electoral Commission staff**

There have been fewer than expected enquiries or applications received since the last meeting (16 January 2023) that are relevant to candidacy for the general elections or campaign work.

There will be another social media advertising campaign scheduled for the near future. Information packs were sent out to political parties, as well as electronic communication of television advertising campaign, prior to launch.

MOJ will need to review from a policy perspective on how successful the Election Access Fund has been once this election campaign is over, with the understanding that this will take time to reach an acceptable level of success. Also to consider supporting local body elections instead of just the general elections and by-elections, which would require a change in legislation to be filed.

### **Any other business**

Nil

### **Next meeting**

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 1pm.

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

**Date:** 8 May 2023  
**Time:** 1.00pm-2.00pm  
**Location:** Online via Zoom  
**Chair:** Dianne Glenn  
**Members:** Huhana Hickey  
Robbie Watene  
Jade Farrar  
Leigh Deuchars, Electoral Commission  
**Other attendees:** Charmaine James (Secretariat)  
**Apologies:** None

## **Minutes**

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were adopted with no corrections (Dianne/Huhana).

Action points completed:

- Charmaine investigated converting the panel assessment form to a SharePoint/web based form, a test link was share with the panel.
- EAF team sourced hiring alternatives for acquiring equipment.

Matters arising:

- No clear policy on the hiring or purchasing of equipment for applicants.

### **Conflict of Interests**

Nil

### **Applicant 001 \$15,011.27**

Recommendation: Applicant has already been approved for Support assistant and travel expense to the amount of \$ 11,597.50. To grant funding of approximately \$1,000 to cover cost of hiring or purchasing the laptop required. EAF team to contact the applicant with the option of either hiring the laptop at a cost of \$1,050 or buying the laptop through the Electoral Commission's purchasing account at a cost of approximately \$1,500 with an option for the candidate to buy the laptop at the end of the candidacy for \$500.

*Action:*

- EAF team to contact Applicant001 regarding the options that are available for the laptop and to provide a clear indication of the reasoning behind the offer for equipment.

### **Process improvements**

The following process improvements were identified during discussion of Applicant 001:

- Assessment form to evolve and adapt to members of the panel as the dynamics of the members change.
- To look into a SharePoint site where all application documentation relevant to panel meetings and applications may be reviewed online, to avoid sending documents via email.

*Actions:*

- Charmaine to investigate the use of a Sharepoint site for panel members to access and review application documents instead of the files/documents being emailed to them.
- Policy to be discussed and refined on the purchase or hiring of hardware, and the cost v duration of use of the acquired hardware. Leigh to contact relevant parties to discuss at the next available meeting.

**Update from Electoral Commission staff**

No updates noted for this meeting.

**Any other business**

Option of using the next panel meeting or a time available for all parties to discuss with the Audit team (KPMG) and Ben (Legal and Policy) and to include Election Access Fund Steering Group members, Mojo Mathers and Vaughan Dodd.

To ask the Audit team to present a deep dive into the concept of auditing a fund like this.

**Next meeting**

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023, 1pm.

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

**Date:** 7 June 2023  
**Time:** 10:30 am-11:30am  
**Location:** Online via Zoom  
**Chair:** Dianne Glenn  
**Members:** Huhana Hickey  
Robbie Watene  
Jade Farrar  
Leigh Deuchars, Electoral Commission  
**Other attendees:** Charmaine James (Secretariat)  
**Apologies:** Huhana Hickey

## **Minutes**

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

The meeting started with a Karakia lead by Robbie. The minutes were adopted with no corrections (Dianne/Jade).

Action points completed:

- Charmaine investigated access to SharePoint site, invitations were sent to the panel members but with little to no success. The Electoral Commission IT team are further investigating access.

Matters arising:

- Purchasing or hiring of equipment came into discussion under the Applicant001 with no clear policy, and will be regarded on an individual application case by case basis until a policy has been drafted and accepted.
- Policy on the Equipment provided for the EAF applicants team sourced hiring alternatives for acquiring equipment. Leigh has been in contact with the team that was responsible for drafting the EAF policy documents and has included the new Manager for Strategy, Risk and Assurance (who is legally trained) to have a fresh look at the legislation and advise if we are interpreting the barriers this correctly. They have come back to say that there is a bit of inconsistency in how the legislation is drafted and could be interpreted in 2 ways. What will be needed is a set of principles or framework that help us work through the wording of legislation and how it is interpreted in individual situations. It would serve us well to ensure that the core interpretation of the legislation is correct before proceeding any further.
- Jade has requested that a few key documents be referenced around future principles, being the UNCRPD, Te Tiriti, and Enabling good lives.

### **Conflict of Interests**

Nil

Identifiable information was still included in the application form for Applicant002. The EAF team is to look at a more thorough process of double-checking forms to ensure this is not missed for future applicants.

### **Applicant 001**

An email was circulated on 19 May 2023 with the panel members to give their final recommendation to approve the access of equipment through the Electoral Commission with the option of purchasing of the laptop the end of the Election campaign for \$500.00. All members responded to support the recommendation made to acquire this laptop for the applicant.

### **Applicant 002 \$15,000.00 inc. GST**

Discussion: Applicant has applied for a support administrator/person, where the request is above the considered payrate in the guidelines of the application. The amount of \$50p/hr for 300hrs was quoted on the budget. It was noted that while the payrate guidelines are there for a support assistant, we need to consider that this request is for a more admin intensive support role to assist in the administrative tasks that forms the barrier the applicant faces, not a support assistant that would aid you in your personal access needs to get through your day. Due to the fast pace and crucial role that the support administrator will play, one can understand the need for a more experienced and qualified person to help remove the barrier the applicant faces to perform at the same level of peers that do not face these barriers, resulting in a higher payrate. The panel discussed the need for more information on the hourly rate provided in the budget. Further information was received from the applicant after the meeting papers were distributed, surrounding the reason for the quoted rate. Noting that a contractor has to pay their own taxes and ACC levy, they are usually priced 25% higher priced, to cover these costs. It was also mentioned that other contractors within the public sector earn a higher hourly rate than what is being considered.

### **Applicant 003 \$10,000.00+GST**

Discussion:

Applicant has applied for a support administrator/person, where the request is above the considered payrate in the guidelines of the application. The amount of \$40p/hr for 250hrs +gst was quoted on the budget. As discussed for applicant002, the needs for the support administrator are similar, but at a slightly lower cost than applicant002, where this would equate to \$46 p/hr inclusive of gst. This slight difference in the hours requested could be directly related to the extent of assistance that is required of the administrator.

It would make better sense to have consistency and equality in the payrate, where this would prove beneficial to the applicant's showing equality and dignity in the support they receive. We should look to build and enable the applicants to be as successful as they can be without the barriers that they face.

All members of the panel gave their recommendations to approve, Charmaine is to forward a summary to Huhana regarding the outcome of today's meeting for her comment.

*Action:*

- EAF team to investigate adding a category for those who help those with neurological/cognitive/neuro divergent conditions that do not fit in the current categories outlined for support workers, that will cover part of the review to look at how we can include the category.



### **Process improvements**

The following process improvements were identified during discussion of Applicant 002 and 003:

- Payrate guidance for support assistants.
- To look into a SharePoint site where all application documentation relevant to panel meetings and applications may be reviewed online, to avoid sending documents via email.

### *Actions:*

- Charmaine to investigate the radio buttons on page 2 of the Assessment form as they seem to be linked to the previous page, where selecting your response had resulted in removing the option selected in the prior question.

### **Update from Electoral Commission staff**

Evaluation is underway together with the ministry review on how we get through lessons learnt and what changes can be made to better support the fund. No other updates noted for this meeting.

### **Any other business**

Dianne requested EAF information, which she has circulated to Pauline [REDACTED] Senior Advisor - Policy, Strategy and Partnerships, Whaikaha who would be able to share this further through the disabled community.

Jade attended the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) conference in Sydney the previous week, where there were discussions on defining principles around the support for campaigning candidates and how that support is spent, with identifying a framework of what is reasonable and necessary. He spoke of an example of a candidate using his NDIS budget to campaign which helped him win and is now the disabled Green MP for his area. More information on the framework could be found on the internet, searching for NDIS.

Robbie closed off the meeting with the Karakia

### **Next meeting**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 1pm.

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

**Date:** 11 September 2023  
**Time:** 1:00 pm-2:00 pm  
**Location:** Online via Zoom  
**Chair:** Dianne Glenn  
**Members:** Huhana Hickey  
Robbie Watene  
Jade Farrar  
Leigh Deuchars, Electoral Commission  
**Other attendees:** Charmaine James (Secretariat)  
**Apologies:** None

## **Minutes**

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

The meeting started with a Karakia lead by Leigh. The minutes were adopted with the addition of “of” in the paragraph relating to Matters Arising and approved by (Dianne/Robbie).

#### **Action points completed:**

- EAF team met with the Steering group to discuss adding a category for those with neurological/cognitive/neuro divergent conditions that do not fit in the current categories outlined for support workers. The outcome was that the policy was reviewed and adapted to the need to manage the exceptions and strengthen our advice between the barrier faced from a disability and the type of support required. The EAF team has started to emphasize the allocation in the funding letter to successful applicants to give a clearer understanding of what support they have applied for and what the funding covers. The team also includes a cover letter with guidance and a reminder that funding is not to be used for campaign work.
- Radio buttons on the Assessment form was corrected.

#### **Matters arising:**

- SharePoint access still an issue.
- The team to look at removing the support pay guidelines for next round.

#### **Action Points:**

- Charmaine to contact IT to figure out the issues with access SharePoint.

## **Declarations of Interests**

Nil

## **Applications**

### **Applicant 001 - \$240.00**

The panel reviewed the application for further funding for the rental of a Mains powered amplified speaker with added headset wireless microphone for a period of 8 weeks. All were

in favour of supporting the application, with a question raised about insurance for the unit during the rental period.

**Action Points:**

- Charmaine to contact the applicant to find out about insurance on the unit and the rental amount covers this, and to report back to the panel.
- Charmaine to provide panel members with the total amount for funding previously applied for Applicant001.

**Contextual Information and update for EC Staff**

- Possible application to come through, asked for applicant to return completed application by Wednesday 13 September.
- The team has been in contact with other applicants, updates and necessary reports have been received as expected.
- Turning minds to the review process after the Elections. EC is looking to do an in-depth review of the fund and the changes made to the policy, and what's next.
- Feedback from applicants about their experience with the fund and process will be used to support the review.
- Jade brought to attention that in 2017 the cabinet signed up for a "Try, Learn and Adjust" approach, where partnership is key to this approach and use this approach as a component of the review. He a

**General matters**

nil

**Closing**

Leigh closed off the meeting with the Karakia. Huhana volunteered for the Karakia at the next meeting.

**Next meeting**

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 1pm.

**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.