

12 August 2019



Ms Carolyn Tremain  
Chief Executive  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment  
PO Box 1473  
Wellington 6140

Dear Carolyn

### Update on external review of Operation Exploration

Thank you for your letter of 24 July 2019, responding to my letter of 17 December 2018.

I wrote to you at the end of last year, following the State Services Commission Inquiry into the use of external security consultants by government agencies. As a result of the Inquiry findings, I asked you to undertake a review of Operation Exploration and to advise me of your view as to whether it should continue (in its current form, or at all) and of the steps that you intend to take.

In February 2019, you commissioned Simon Murdoch to conduct an external review of Operation Exploration. I am pleased to be advised that Mr Murdoch has now completed that review and that you have accepted his 13 recommendations. It is evident from your letter that implementation work is well-underway and that the various government agencies involved are working collaboratively on this matter. I am also encouraged by the clear focus in both Mr Murdoch's report and in your letter, on responding to the Inquiry's findings, the impartiality requirement in the code of conduct and the information gathering model standards.

While I appreciate the offer, I do not think there is a need for me to meet with Mr Murdoch to go through his report. From your letter, I am confident in your leadership of this work and that you have the appropriate assurances.

Thank you for your leadership of the review of Operation Exploration and for ensuring that MBIE is appropriately exercising the significant regulatory responsibilities entrusted to the agency by the New Zealand public.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Peter Hughes'.

Peter Hughes  
State Services Commissioner