



23 May 2024

Heather Baggott
Acting Public Service Commissioner
Te Kawa Mataaho
Level 10, Reserve Bank of New Zealand Building
2 The Terrace
Wellington 6140

Tēnā koe Heather

**Te Kawa Mataaho 'Look Into' 2023 Senior Advisor - Māori Capability
Recruitment Process**

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss the memorandum that has been issued by Pania Gray regarding the above matter.

I accept the findings set out in the memorandum and I note that the recruitment process being looked into was considered to be conventional and largely sound. I was pleased to see that those involved in the process sought to do what they thought was procedurally correct and to act in a fair and unbiased manner.

Notwithstanding the above, I acknowledge that there are areas requiring improvement. Therefore, in response to the findings, and to provide confidence that Te Puni Kōkiri has integrity in its appointment processes, I propose to take the following steps:

1. I will ensure that Te Puni Kōkiri updates its '*Recruitment Policy*' to align with the system guidance issued by Te Kawa Mataaho '*Public Service Recruitment – Guidance to support Public Service recruiters*' and '*Workforce Assurance Model Standards*'. Specific areas for improvement will include:
 - a. explicit processes for considering and dealing with an applicant's professional misconduct;
 - b. a requirement to ask direct and specific questions at referee checks to establish if there have been any previous occurrences of serious misconduct, if the candidate has been dismissed from employment, or if the referee ever had any reason to question the candidate's integrity; and
 - c. explicit processes for recording dissenting views of interview panel members and addressing potential risks of appointment where professional misconduct is a factor.
2. I will ensure that Te Puni Kōkiri updates its '*Review of Appointment Policy*' to reflect Te Kawa Mataaho guidance "*Public Service Agencies conducting a review of appointment process*" and this updated procedure will be approved by the Public Service Commissioner in accordance with the Public Service Act 2020. Specific areas for improvement will include:
 - a. explicit requirements that a formal sub-delegation from the Secretary must be in place before a Deputy Secretary or any other official can take any action in relation to requests for a review of appointment;



- b. explicit requirements that, where requests for review of appointments are received, person/s involved in the recruitment process for that appointment must not be involved in the processes or decision making regarding the review of that appointment;
 - c. explicit recognition that reviews of appointment are to be seen as opportunities to gain insights into Te Puni Kōkiri process, to enable continuous improvement and to provide confidence that Te Puni Kōkiri has integrity in its appointment processes.
3. I will contact all kaimahi who requested a review of the appointment acknowledging their requests for review and informing them that Te Puni Kōkiri has accepted the findings of the 'look into'. I will also assure them that our '*Review of Appointment Policy*' will be updated to incorporate the findings of the 'look into' to ensure that better processes are applied to requests in the future.
4. I will engage directly with the organisation and inform all kaimahi that Te Puni Kōkiri has accepted the findings of the 'look into' and that our '*Recruitment Policy*' and '*Review of Appointment Policy*' will be updated to incorporate these findings. I will also set out my clear expectations around the need for all staff to comply with TPK policies and system wide guidance in this space.
5. I will also write to the senior leaders in the organisation, drawing their attention to the findings of the 'look into' and inviting them to better familiarise themselves with the system wide guidance provided by Te Kawa Mataaho referenced in the memorandum. I will set out my clear expectations that Te Puni Kōkiri policies must be kept up to date and must at all times reflect current system wide guidance.

I am confident that the steps I propose to take will result in an enhanced framework for recruitment and review processes and will prevent similar issues arising in future.

Ngā mihi



Dave Samuels
Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Puni Kōkiri

