

# Hon Chris Penk

Minister for Building and Construction  
Minister for Land Information  
Minister for Veterans  
Associate Minister of Defence  
Associate Minister of Immigration



**01 AUG 2024**

Rt Hon Simon Upton  
PO Box 10 241  
**WELLINGTON 6140**

Ref: MIN 25-004

Dear Rt Hon Simon Upton

Thank you for your letter, dated 15 July 2024, sharing your concerns regarding Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) ceasing its leadership of the New Zealand Marine Geospatial Information (MGI) Working Group and Common Operating Data for Emergency Management (CODEM) work.

I agree with your observations that discoverable and accessible geospatial data is of significant benefit to New Zealand.

In relation to the MGI Working Group, it has provided a forum for communication between its members with an aim to leverage resource where possible and support each other's work across the marine data system. LINZ is working with the interim chair of the MGI Working Group to understand what an appropriate membership from LINZ could look like.

Leading the MGI Working Group and its work programme is not something LINZ has ever been specifically funded, mandated or directed by government to deliver. Given the current fiscal environment, LINZ must focus on its core business of collecting, maintaining, improving and publishing its geospatial information. In the marine geospatial information system this means collecting hydrographic data to create nautical charts and delivering the [3D Coastal Mapping programme](#)<sup>1</sup>.

Your letter notes that leading the MGI Working Group is "effectively one FTE". I have been advised by LINZ that while one FTE was allocated to lead the working group and coordinate its work programme, the delivery of its work required leadership focus and resource from supporting functions within LINZ. This support included geospatial expertise, application development, and general administration support for communications and engagement activities.

LINZ's decision to step away from the leadership of the MGI working group was considered carefully. LINZ determined this was an appropriate operational decision as part of its efforts to find savings and reprioritise resources in line with government expectations. This is in the context of already disestablishing 54 vacant positions and stopping or scaling back some non-core work resulting in six occupied roles being disestablished.

With regards to a national data strategy, the Government Chief Data Steward (GCDS) is responsible for leading the data system on behalf of the public service. I understand LINZ, as the government agency responsible for geospatial information, is working with the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.linz.govt.nz/our-work/location-information/3d-coastal-mapping-programme>

GCDS to ensure LINZ is connected to broader strategic work being done across the data system.

I am confident LINZ will continue its longstanding commitment to open, accessible and interoperable geospatial data.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Penk', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely'.

Hon Chris Penk  
**Minister for Land Information**