

Hon Dr Shane Reti

Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology
Minister for Universities
Minister of Statistics
Minister for Pacific Peoples



17 March 2025

Rt Hon Dr Simon Upton
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
Ref: SRC-072

Tēnā koe Dr Upton

Proposed restructuring of public research establishments

Thank you for your follow up letter of 7 March 2025, regarding the consideration of environmental research in the restructuring of the Crown Research Institutes (CRIs). I appreciate your explanation of the historical context of the establishment of the CRIs, and your thoughtful considerations of the distribution of science capabilities across the Bioeconomy and Earth Sciences Public Research Organisations (PROs).

While our focus is on economic growth, I am also aware of the key stewardship and public good that the CRIs perform. This includes critical research, data and services on environment, and enabling the functioning of the Ministries for the Environment and Primary Industries, Department of Conservation, Regional Councils, alongside others.

The CRIs, working with MBIE, are currently performing the detailed due diligence required to support mergers. Final decisions are yet to be made, and officials are still formulating their advice to me on this matter. As the reforms progress, there will be a number of opportunities to refine the focus of organisational capabilities, including from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.

I understand that you had a constructive conversation with MBIE officials and the Chief Executive of Manaaki Whenua recently. I also note that, following your additional request for information under Section 19 of the Environment Act, MBIE are preparing material in response to this request, and also looking to provide additional earlier material that may be of interest to you. This should be with you prior to our meeting on 26 March 2025.

I appreciate your interest in these matters, and look forward to discussing the future of New Zealand's environmental research with you in person.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Reti'.

Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology