



CJ and VA Turnbull

1/07/2024

Tēnā korua

Thank you for your letter of 27 February. I firstly wish to convey my apologies for the delay in responding to you. Soon after receiving your letter we were contacted by the Ombudsman, and in responding to that letter we inadvertently failed to communicate directly with you.

The Ombudsman has raised a concern that our letter to you suggested that specific matters in relation to your complaint about Christine Menzies and Murray Roberts were considered by the Ombudsman when they were not. We agree that we could have been clearer and have written to the Ombudsman confirming this. We apologise for any confusion this has caused. What we intended to convey is that the subject matter in general had been covered through multiple avenues, including the Chief Ombudsman's report.

For completeness, we have reviewed the paragraphs of concern and reworded these to more clearly explain our position. These are noted below, with the re-worded parts in italics.

In relation to Ms Menzies:

The second example provides a descriptor of our role as regulator and every Ministry manager is in the same situation. There is no evidence that Christine was acting to protect staff or herself, and engaging an external consultant to investigate the issue was to ensure there was an independent, without bias, review of your complaint. *We consider that the information you have provided falls short of establishing deception.*

The broader issue has also been considered by the Ombudsman. The Ministry has accepted the need to provide clear and unambiguous guidance, which is now in effect, and legislation has been amended accordingly.

You have also raised concerns that the Police investigation was flawed. We cannot address the concerns about Police processes, as that is a matter for Police. Any further concerns regarding the Police investigation should be raised directly with Police.

In relation to Mr Roberts:

The evidence you have provided includes file notes created by Police during their investigation. The weight or inference that Police drew from comments made, and their subsequent actions are a matter for Police.



The drafting of guidelines and the investigation report are subjects that have been well traversed, and I do not consider that the information you have provided warrants further investigation.

Your letter provides further comments and challenges about former staff and contractors, predominately dating back to 2016-17. I have noted your concerns but am unable to reach the same conclusions. I consider that these past events have had significant scrutiny and do not believe that there is sufficiently new information to warrant further investigation.

I thank you again for your determination to drive changes for children and young people and note the significant impact this has had across New Zealand schools. In my previous response I outlined some of the areas in which we will continue to work, to ensure all young people are safe at school and able to thrive. We also await the report of Royal Commission and will continue to work with Advisory Groups, sector representatives, disability groups and other agencies to support this kaupapa. This continues to be our focus moving forward.

I extend best wishes to you and your family for the future.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Bell', written in a cursive style.

Nancy Bell
Hautū | Deputy Secretary
Te Mahau | Te Tai Runga