


OC241140

22 October 2024

Tēnā koe 

I refer to your email/letter dated 24 September 2024, requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“Kia ora

A request probably for your OIA team –

I would like a copy of the Debbie Francis report from 2022.

It is mentioned in correspondence on your agency’s recent performance review 

The following document falls within the scope of your request and are enclosed:

- *Growing Opportunities Debbie Francis Slides*

The slides are the report mentioned in correspondence on your agency’s recent performance review.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman’s website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

The Ministry publishes our Official Information Act responses, and the information contained in our reply to you may be published on the Ministry website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Nāku noa, nā



Suzanne Williams
Human Resources Manager

TOWARDS A THREE-YEAR EXCELLENCE HORIZON

Te Manatū Waka



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OUTLINE

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The Excellence Horizon



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BACKGROUND & APPROACH

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BACKGROUND & APPROACH

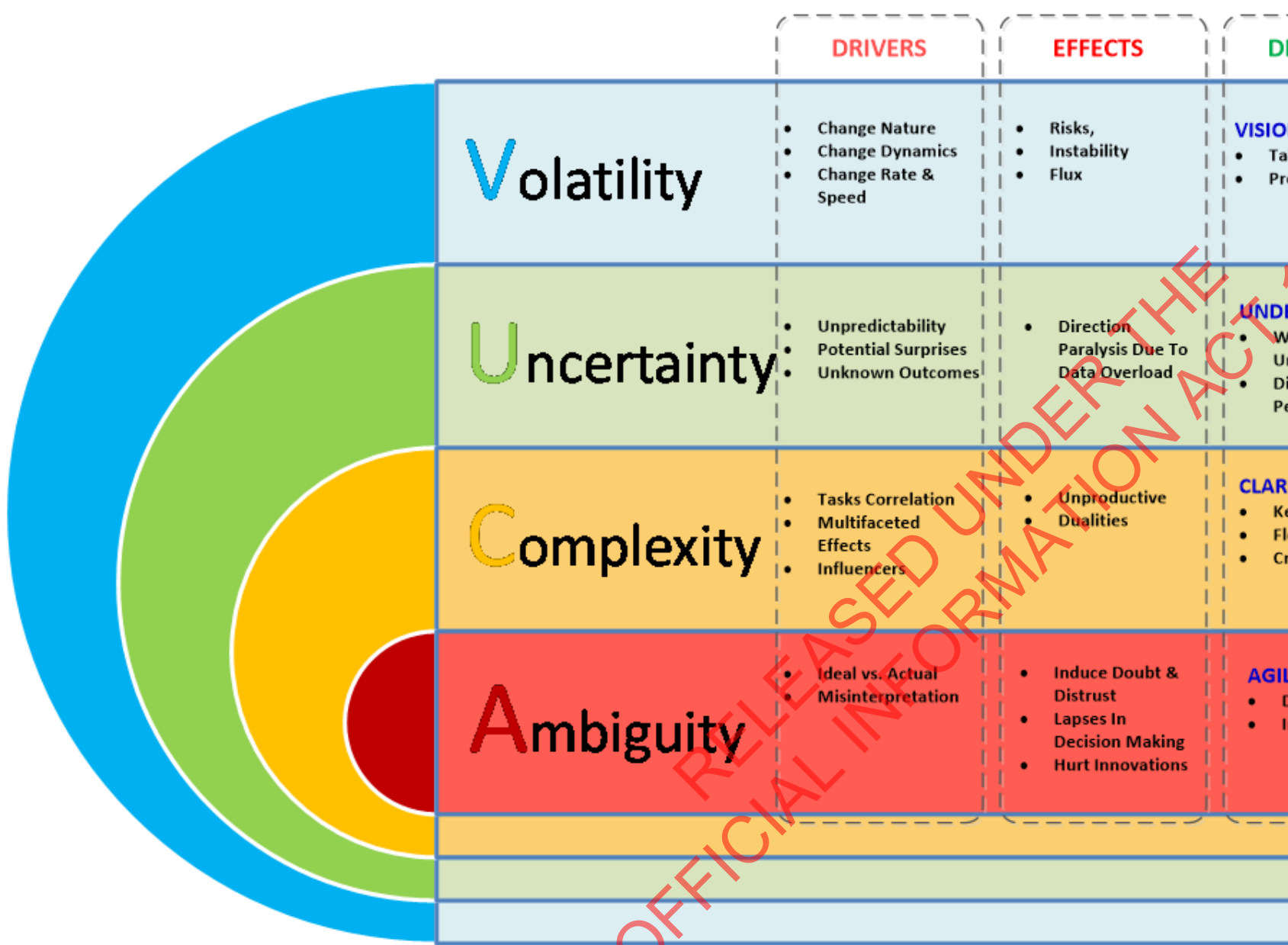
- In preparing this advice for the Senior Leadership Team, I considered the following questions: "What is the contribution that Aotearoa - New Zealand needs from Te Manatū Waka - The Ministry of Transport and, therefore, what is the performance challenge? And if the agency is to be successful at meeting the future performance challenge, what would success look like in three years? Does it have the change capability to get there?"
- My work was undertaken over a three-week time period. It was based on interviews and focus groups with a wide range of staff and stakeholders. A high-level survey of relevant documents was also undertaken.
- I also had considerable input from a cross section of Te Manatū Waka's partners and stakeholders, who are committed to building stronger collaboration in the future.
- I anticipate that the Senior Leadership team will develop an Action Plan for the Growing Opportunities programme, partly in response to the observations I have made.

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THE OPERATING CONTEXT



IT'S A VUCA WORLD...

- The transport system, in New Zealand and globally, is facing a wave of disruption and volatility. The way people and goods travel and connect is changing rapidly in fundamental ways, propelled by a series of converging forces for change.
- Each of these developments poses significant challenges and opportunities for Te Manatū Waka, not only in ensuring awareness - and understanding - of developments but in crafting and executing swift and effective legislative, policy and regulatory responses, both directly and through other system players.
- As lead agency for the transport system, Te Manatū Waka will need to adapt in such a way as to shape, lead and drive change in this rapidly evolving, yet also unpredictable, transport ecosystem.

Be prepared to challenge the status quo, embrace technology and innovation in its policy making and monitoring activities, and embrace a flexible mindset, equipped and able to address disruption.

Have courage and a degree of boldness. The core shift is likely to be away from an inwards focus on individual work programmes to an outwards and solutions-oriented mindset focused on the entire transport and mobility ecosystem.

Develop appropriate and proportionate responses to these changes in a timely way. Delayed responses will risk those innovations moving to other jurisdictions, depriving New Zealand of the benefits they offer.

Reflect on how it uses its existing tool kit, capabilities and priorities given its size and information asymmetries with other system agencies and partners. Stays abreast of future trends and opportunities.

Maintain focus on key change programmes underway today, including for example goals to reduce harm on the roads which requires a coordinated approach across agencies and across levers.

Reconsider engagement models, leadership styles and the possibility of achieving efficiencies through using data effectively, in combination with new policy making, regulatory and funding technologies and tools.

Use agile, technology enabled outreach to stakeholders will also replace the more traditional and often lengthy consultation processes typically used at present, allowing the agency to respond to concerns in timely way and engage on a principle led basis where appropriate.

Partner with the other transport agencies and stakeholders to co-design or pilot innovative approaches. Te Manatu Waka will need to move seamlessly between partnering and its other, more traditional roles of performance monitoring, evaluation and outcome reporting.

Act as a catalyst for the transport and mobility ecosystem of the future. Get out in front of the changes. The agency needs a clear and simple vision about the path forward, as well a laser focus on outcomes.

Guide the system, over the next ten years, to achieve decarbonisation and to connect across other related systems. Te Manatu Waka will need to partner with other agencies and local government to help them understand what is needed and to co-design ways ahead.

TE MANATŪ WAKA NEEDS TO...

IT'S TIME TO PIVOT FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT...

Te Manatū Waka is at an inflexion point. To date, its modest size and its 'thin' mandate to provide high level system leadership have meant that it can be run - and has been run - in a manner akin to that of a small family firm. It has had strong leadership from the top. It has relied on a cadre of highly engaged and talented people and a strong internal culture.

Against the backdrop of a volatile and rapidly changing operating environment, an ambitious Government agenda for the transport ecosystem and the many domains with which it intersects, and increasing public expectations, this approach is beginning to creak. The agency and its people are feeling stretched. There is now a serious risk that the sound performance to date will not be sustained moving forward.

What got Te Manatū Waka to this point, it not the same at what will get it *from* here.

For the next phase of its development, the agency will need to build on its institutional strengths, as well as carefully consider the organisational implications of what it means to be a 'system steward' for transport and mobility in New Zealand.

WHAT STAFF SAID ABOUT THE KEY SHIFTS REQUIRED...

From

- Mandate focus
- Slow and risk averse
- Inward looking
- Planning bottom up and in silos
- Tactical relationships within a project frame
- Policy perfection and then consult
- Pure policy capability
- One size fits all Crown entity monitoring

To

- Expansive sense of system and opportunity
- Bold, agile and prepared to fail fast
- Outward looking to industry, consumers and global trends
- Planning from outcomes for the whole of enterprise
- Key strategic partnerships
- Codesign, 80/20 and evaluate
- Policy capability which factors in implementation, commercials and end users
- Monitoring calibrated to risk

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AN ORGANISATIONAL INFLEXION POINT

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IT'S ABOUT STEWARDSHIP...

- The system stewardship role is akin to that of an orchestra conductor, whose job it is to ensure that a complex ensemble cast will deliver a production to achieve the desired impact on listeners. The conductor's default position is to conduct rather than create, do or deliver. She gains the results she wants through the art and industry of others. The Ministry needs to reflect on whether it sees itself in this way. Are there times when it both composes and conducts, and if so, when are they? Does it from time to time play first violin, and if so, why? Are there times when the conductor should leave the stage entirely to others? How will the conductor hold the various members of the cast to account for satisfactory performance?
- The term stewardship has connotations of guardianship or kaitiakitanga. Over what time frame does the agency think about its purpose and strategy, given the long timeframes entailed in the infrastructural aspects of the system and the importance of intergenerational equity outcomes? If Te Manatū Waka is to serve not only the Government of the day but successive governments, what does that mean for prioritisation and for the way in which its advice is shaped and delivered?

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AND THE FUTURE VALUE PROPOSITION...

- More is being demanded of the transport system by society and governments. There is a much greater recognition of the role that the transport system plays in supporting wellbeing and how it can partner with other systems to support wider goals including decarbonisation and more liveable towns and cities. In this context, the Ministry is facing challenges in how it provides system direction, how it takes on wider more delivery focused functions such as ALR and how it balances these with its planning and monitoring roles.
- These demands are unlikely to change, so as system steward, Te Manatu Waka will need to reflect on how it focuses its efforts.
- As a small agency, it will need to think very carefully about, in the words of the current Chief Executive, 'what it is in the system that only Te Manatū Waka can do.' This requires discipline, the courage to push back on Ministers if required and a consistent focus on outcomes across multiple horizons. It requires thinking through intervention options from an investment perspective.

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VISION, PURPOSE STRATEGY

VISION AND PURPOSE

- The current purpose statement, while unimpeachable, is generic and high level ('Enabling New Zealanders to flourish'), rather than a statement of ambition with a measurable outcome.
- The absence of an ambitious, yet concrete and measurable, 'light on the hill' to guide staff is making it difficult for people in Te Manatū Waka to prioritise their work.
- The vision is also insufficiently galvanising to unify an agency characterised by some relatively strong organisational silos.
- It is, therefore, understandable that Te Manatū Waka's people are more likely to default to statutory mandates and to individuals' personal interpretation of their missions for their 'why.' They may tend to look inwards and down, rather than across and out. This, in turn, risks adversely impacting the development of a systems-based and holistic view of Te Manatū Waka's leadership role, which is consistently understood and applied across the agency.
- A refreshed vision and purpose will help create the aspiration, inspiration, and shared focus for the next phase of Te Manatū Waka's journey. It will need to be clearly and succinctly communicated through the organisation.
- It should act as the 'golden thread' through the development and delivery of strategy and operating model and so provide the consistency, coherence and commitment needed for an effective and successful next chapter for the agency.

STRATEGY

- The current pivot point provides an opportunity for Te Manatū Waka to reflect on its approach to setting strategy.
- Staff told me that while they found the outcomes and shifts useful in providing a high-level framing for their day-to-day work, it was difficult to see how the work of different teams joined up across the organisation and impossible to use the existing organisational purpose or outcomes to guide day to day prioritisation of effort.
- They suggested both the need for a more joined up single narrative on transport system strategy (at a level above the existing 'mezzanine strategies' for system elements) and a simple, clear strategy for Te Manatū Waka as an organisation with a three-to-five-year horizon. While I agree that both are needed, I suggest that the organisational strategy is the more immediate priority.
- The process will need to ask: 'if Te Manatū Waka is to succeed in implementing its system-facing strategies and act as an effective steward of the transport system, what are the implications and priority investments required in organisational capability?'
- It need not be complex (given the intellectual horsepower the agency has at its disposal it may be possible to distill it onto a single page), but I suggest it be approached with urgency.

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CULTURE AND VALUES

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VALUES

Resetting for the next chapter of Te Manatū Waka's journey provides an opportunity to reexamine both the core values and the Te Ao Māori statements, to reflect the new vision and strategy.

A refreshed set of organisational values will include, clear examples of good (and not so good) behaviours communicated through and workshopped across the agency.

There is also an opportunity to ensure that the refreshed values are reflected in each element of the employee lifecycle; from hiring and induction, through development and promotion. They will play a central and transparent role in performance assessments, employee recognition and decisions about progression.

CULTURE

- Staff typically described the culture of the agency as collaborative, friendly and informal; all strengths that they are keen to retain as the agency grows.
- They saw the shadow sides of the culture as conservatism, a desire for perfectionism in the core policy craft, and a tendency to circle around issues, rather than make decisions.
- Most reported that the main joy in their work related to times when all the parts of the agency, and the system, worked smoothly together in service of an ambitious outcome.
- These cultural strengths will be critical to successful system stewardship in the future, while the less helpful traits are likely to be problematic given the speed of transformation in the transport and mobility sectors.
- Leaders will need to consistently model and message the importance of these positive traits and actively work to mitigate the impact of the less desirable threads within the cultural fabric.

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OPERATING MODEL

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WHAT IS AN OPERATING MODEL?

- A refreshed and clear organisational strategy alone will not ensure results.
- The SLT will reflect on whether its operating model can effectively implement the revised organisational strategy and deliver both the refreshed vision and the system stewardship approach it contemplates.
- An operating model is the blueprint for how an organisation's resources are organised and operated to get critical work done. The operating model addresses issues including the shape and size of the business, where the boundaries for each line of business are to be drawn and how people are to work together in and across teams.
- In examining its operating model in the context of a refreshed strategy, Te Manatū Waka should apply a wide-angle lens which focuses on the entire agency.
- I suggest a particular focus on five key elements, as follows.

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KEY ELEMENT: PEOPLE AND CAPABILITY

Changes in the vision and strategy will likely necessitate several changes in how Te Manatū Waka resources and manages its work force for the next stage of its development.

Hiring

- Given the tightness of the current labour market, the agency will want to reflect further on its recruitment proposition.
- The transformational forces impacting the transport system and Te Manatū Waka's strategic ambitions as system steward will require knowledge and expertise the agency currently does not have. It will need to seek out and attract new skill sets mirroring those in the sectors and systems it enables and leads.
- There are also opportunities to explore creative approaches to talent acquisition. The agency may not necessarily be able (or need) to 'own' this specialist talent, but it should know how to access it from across the ecosystem. For instance, two-way secondment and exchange arrangements with industry and sharing specialist resources with other agencies across the system could be considered.
- Te Manatū Waka will also want to be vigilant in ensuring its recruitment processes consider not only technical skills, but also personal attributes and behaviours aligned to the refreshed values. It will need to ensure that its current culture recognises, accepts and is both willing, and able, to welcome and work with this more diverse workforce.

KEY ELEMENT: PEOPLE AND CAPABILITY

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Leadership development

- I also see a very significant set of opportunities for Te Manatū Waka in the leadership development area.
- The first is clarifying the expectations of managers and leaders – in particular, the balance of leadership and management responsibilities at all levels. As the agency grows, the balance between managing and doing, particularly at senior levels, should change. Current arrangements are not likely to be sustainable.
- At tiers two and three leaders may not consistently be giving appropriate time to managing and coaching their people. I sense this may be having an adverse impact on aspects of Te Manatū Waka's operations, including workflow, efficiency, the empowerment of junior staff and teams' understanding of the overall strategy.
- The second is supporting leaders, through learning and development and coaching initiatives, in living and clearly communicating the Te Manatū Waka's vision and strategy and how the responsibilities and accountabilities of their teams align to them. Staff told me that the coaching and performance feedback skills of managers varied, leading to inconsistent staff experiences and levels of engagement.
- The third is working with leaders to – and ensuring newly recruited and appointed leaders – apply and display behaviours supporting the refreshed Te Manatū Waka values and behaviours.

KEY ELEMENT: PEOPLE AND CAPABILITY

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Mindset

- It will be imperative that, in future, every Te Manatū Waka staff member understands and applies a results/solutions focussed mindset in performing their role and duties. As system steward and conductor of a complex ensemble orchestra, they will need to be confident in enabling system players to successfully address complex and multivariate problems and trade-offs in a volatile operating context.
- In such settings, pursuit of linear and traditional policy making and regulatory design approaches are unlikely to be sufficiently rapid to address the level of complexity and choice that leading in a system such as this entails. There will always be occasions, calibrated to risk, in which the traditional policy and regulatory development craft should properly be employed, but I would like to see Te Manatū Waka invest in developing design-led policy approaches and tools, including more use of sandboxing, earlier codesign, piloting and fast failure loops.
- There are pockets of these skillsets in house at present, and several projects have employed such approaches in recent times. There is now considerable opportunity to build on these.

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KEY ELEMENT: PEOPLE AND CAPABILITY

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Talent management

- There is also scope to further develop talent management and career pathways.
- In identifying and assessing talent, Te Manatū Waka will want to ensure a focus on developing not only technical expertise in niche areas but also the ability of staff to operate across a range of domains, and ensuring an appropriate balance is struck between the two.
- This is of some importance as there do appear to be significant key person risks in some niche areas requiring technical or specialist expertise. A small number of Auckland staff for example, hold the tier one stakeholder relationships in this critical region. Deeper succession pools could be planned in these areas, supported by investment in carefully targeted professional development interventions.
- As noted below, one of the drivers for the current high turnover of staff appears to be a view by junior staff that there is a relative scarcity of management positions. Staff told me they felt they had to leave the agency to secure a promotion. Regular assessment of staff performance and potential, good coaching and a shift to seeing career development through a system lens, should assist in retaining top talent.

KEY ELEMENT: DATA, INTELLIGENCE AND INSIGHT

Further developing capability in the effective capture, analysis, sharing and use of data, intelligence and insights will be key to any future vision and strategy Te Manatū Waka develops.

Readily accessible and well analysed data, intelligence and insights will be essential to key aspects of activity, from risk profiling (in setting strategy), developing thought leadership to the public and guidance to system participants, through to developing and delivering monitoring programmes.

Given its system stewardship role, Te Manatū Waka should also ensure it has an appropriate level of understanding and access to analysis of consumer wants, needs and behaviours. Internal expertise on customer analytics is not yet broad or deep.

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KEY ELEMENT: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- An important aspect of delivering the revised vision will be ensuring Te Manatū Waka understands the markets, sub systems and participants it will be leading, communicates its expectations of, and provides feedback to, system participants.
- Continued, high quality stakeholder engagement will be important in delivering this outcome.
- Interviews with partners and stakeholders suggested that stakeholder engagement has not been a particular strength of Te Manatū Waka. Stakeholders see the agency and its people as open, and willing to listen – but would also like earlier engagement on complex matters, more speed, greater clarity about what hat the agency is wearing and why, and more thought leadership.
- They suggested that protracted policy development and formal consultation processes, while suited to some matters, are increasingly unworkable given the pace and complexity of system changes and the choices are trade-offs they drive. Partners with whom the agency has engaged in early stage, principles-led design projects reported favourably on the experience.
- Partners and system agencies reported some confusion in relation to Te Manatū Waka’s funding, Crown entity monitoring and system leadership roles. They suggested a need for both greater clarity about strategic intentions in each area and a more joined up approach.

KEY ELEMENT: GOVERNANCE AND DECISION- MAKING

- The current decision-making and governance arrangements for Te Manatū Waka are designed for a small agency. As Te Manatū Waka grows, consideration could be given to reviewing and changing those arrangements to ensure they support the revised vision and strategy.
 - The first issue Te Manatū Waka could consider here is the level of work at which each management cohort is currently operating. My impression is that the DCEs on the SLT are often directly involved in 'doing' as well as in leading, governing and commissioning work. This pushes tier three leaders down a level and makes it hard for this cohort to work more strategically and in a joined-up way across the organisation.
 - A related issue is about where work is commissioned and decisions are made in the organisation, including delegations from the SLT. At present many key decisions, including operational decisions, are made at either the Chief Executive or DCE level, creating bottlenecks and risking slower than desirable decision-making.
 - Staff told me they would value improved line of sight as to where key decisions are made. If Te Manatū Waka is to be an effective, efficient and agile system leader in a fast-changing environment with increased expectations of its role and remit, serious thought must be given to delegating decisions to – and further upskilling and empowering – tier three leaders in particular.
 - Thoughtful consideration should be given to increasing the size of the SLT (I would consider at least the addition of a Māori leadership role, but there are clearly a range of options) to ensure fewer distractions from multiple direct reports and more time to lift their eyes to the horizon. Thought will need to be given to the optimal size and coherence of individual positions. Most DCEs appear to me to be juggling too many disparate responsibilities at present.

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KEY ELEMENT: ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

- Te Manatū Waka's current organisational shape will not support the organisation into the future.
- There are large and variable spans of management control which appear to be impeding the ability of managers to work at the right level and have time to be proactive, forward and outward looking.
- The Ministry takes pride in its 'flat' organisational structure and the accessibility of senior managers. Staff value the current accessibility of managers from the Chief Executive down.
- However, some told me that for a 'flat' organisation on paper, it felt in practice hierarchical and DCE dominated. As the agency grows, I suggest there is a real need to invest in another layer of leadership below tier three managers.
- Besides helping with the levels of work problem identified earlier, this would also assist with broadening career pathways and opportunities for junior staff. In considering this, Te Manatū Waka will want to reflect on its expectations of the Principal Analyst position in particular.

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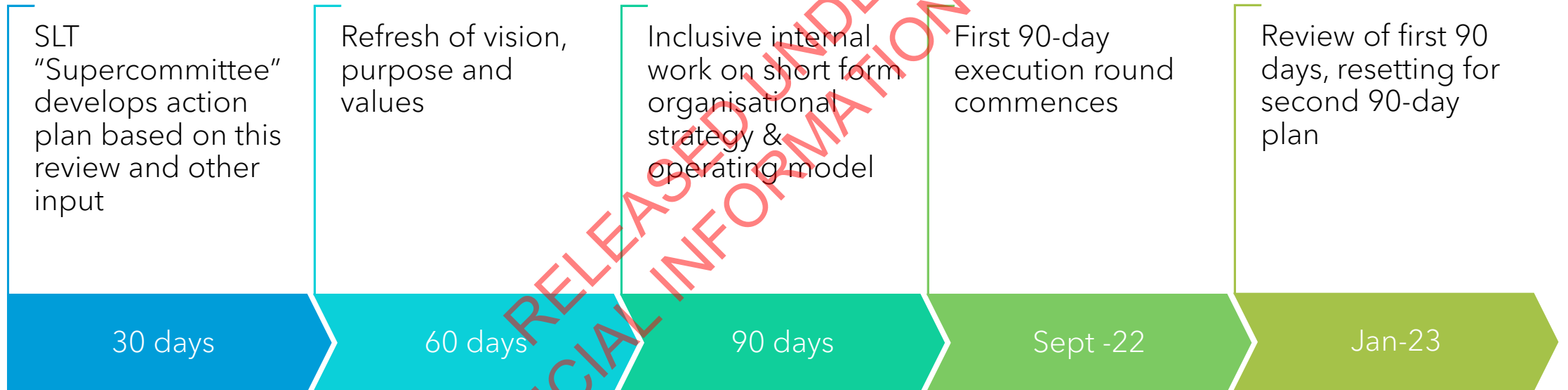
SEQUENCING THE CHANGES

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TIMELINE

I suggest that the changes suggested here be the subject of a timeboxed piece of work over the next three to six months, as shown indicatively below.



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CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION CAPABILITY

- The programme proposed here should be carefully timeboxed. I believe the SLT-led reset of vision, strategy and operating model could be completed in the next three to six months, though the strategic priorities will be executed over a much longer time frame. Te Manatū Waka cannot afford to be distracted for too long from its system roles.
- There are some specific change leadership matters that warrant particular attention:
 - The journey is more important than the destination. The system of improvements I recommend is not about creating glossy corporate publications or grand, capital 'S' strategy. It is about working inclusively with staff and stakeholders to distil the future priorities into a simple roadmap, which unites, guides and galvanises people in their work, in service of a reset 'light on the hill', or organisational vision.
 - It will be important for the new strategy and operating model to tell a good story and not to be analytically perfect or strive to capture all the nuance.
 - The top team will need to get the balance right between business as usual and change. Leaders, if they are correctly fulfilling their stewardship obligations, must operate today's business as well as that of tomorrow.
 - The changes should be stewardship and customer driven, rather than policy or process led. It will be important to drive the transition from the 'outside in;' that is, with an end user focus and the need to act as a steward of the overall transport and mobility ecosystem.

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THE THREE YEAR EXCELLENCE HORIZON

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The Ministry will need to work towards setting an Excellence Horizon. What follows are my thoughts on a what a useful starting point would look like, given my discussions with Ministry staff, partner agencies, and stakeholders.

- By 2025 Te Manatū Waka will have built on its strengths and further clarified its system stewardship role. It will be seen as a visionary, solutions focused, well informed and agile system leadership agency by Ministers, partner agencies, transport and mobility ecosystem participants, consumers and investors.
- System participants will have a clear understanding of Te Manatū Waka's system stewardship role, its strategic priorities and regulatory approach. Its guidance and thought leadership both across the system and to the public will be seen as thought provoking, at times bold, based on well-reasoned evidence and proactive. It will be respected as a leader of public discourse on the transport and mobility ecosystems.
- The Ministry will concentrate its resources and leadership on the key system interventions and treatments that create the greatest value for New Zealand. It will do what only it can do.
- Te Manatū Waka's system stewardship approach and core regulatory disciplines will strike a balance between leading, influencing, enabling and nudging in ensuring system players deliver solutions in a way which is delivering fair and positive outcomes for New Zealand consumers and investors. In doing so, Te Manatū Waka will be carefully balancing efficiency, risk, innovation and equity as it seeks improved results in complex areas such as emissions reduction, urban development and new funding models. It will be respected for doing so in a transparent manner which clearly surfaces key tradeoffs and choices.

WHAT SUCCESS COULD LOOK LIKE

- Te Manatū Waka's strategy and business planning processes will be outward and forward-looking and alive to horizon risks. They will take account of the behaviours and interests of consumers and system participants. Such processes will be inclusive of staff ideas. They will be the subject of both cocreation and consultation with stakeholders and partners. All parts of the agency will understand their role in delivering the strategy, supported by clear performance expectations aligned to the strategy.
- Te Manatū Waka's transport system and organisational strategies will be supported by insights developed through data and intelligence, collected and analysed using up to date technology and tools and a contemporary understanding and well-calibrated assessment of system participant, consumer and investor behaviours. Te Manatū Waka staff will be intellectually curious and courageous in how they generate, analyse and use intelligence to drive and demand creative and sustainable solutions to complex problems.
- By 2025, Te Manatū Waka will be effectively leveraging its role across the entire New Zealand transport system. It will bring the best insights from around the world to the domestic system. It will be seen as a thought leader on transport innovation.
- Te Manatū Waka will be viewed as a dynamic and proactive steward with an adaptive and flexible culture. Internal organisational structure, delegations and information flows will enable agile decision-making on all aspects of its operations.

WHAT SUCCESS COULD LOOK LIKE

- The SLT will operate as a strong, visible and unified team, collectively holding themselves to account for strategy execution and the achievement of key system outcomes. They will be heavily engaged outward, with stakeholders and partners, delegating much of the doing to a cohort of capable tier three leaders.
- The agency will be known for its compelling public service recruitment brand. Working at Te Manatū Waka will be viewed as a rite of passage by many in the transport system. The agency will attract talented people with a passion for improving the system in the interests of New Zealand's prosperity, wellbeing and mitigation of climate change impacts. Everyone who works in the agency will understand how they play a role in contributing to these strategic system outcomes.
- The diversity of Te Manatū Waka's staff will have increased. Staff will use a creative array of approaches to problem solving, including design skills, Te Ao Māori based approaches and co design with partners and those in the system. They will consistently reflect a solutions mindset and take an investment approach to key decisions.
- Many of the things Te Manatū Waka does well now will have been made more systematic and thus more sustainable. Areas of new investment, such as Treaty relationships and consumer behavioural analysis, will be helping to refine system interventions and strengthen Te Manatū Waka's stewardship mindset.
- In 2025 Te Manatū Waka will have retained the core values and behaviours that have served it well to date: accessibility, collegiality and willingness to listen and learn. To these, it will have added systems thinking and stewardship to ensure that the transport and mobility system not only supports the New Zealand economy, but also supports equitable outcomes and New Zealand's brand in the world as a successful player in decarbonisation and environmental protection.

WHAT SUCCESS COULD LOOK LIKE

SUMMARY

Te Manatū Waka is now at an inflexion point.

It faces a challenging operating environment characterised by changing public and Government expectations of transport system outcomes, disruptive forces for change in most transport sectors, and the need to work with and through others to manage legislative and regulatory settings, and market and consumer behaviours.

The size and capability asymmetries between Te Manatū Waka and its regulated or partner entities are significant. As a small agency, it must be clever and focused about where and how it intervenes in the transport system to secure the required outcomes. This entails being clear about where it should lead directly, where it should influence the work of others and when and how it should hold system players to account for results. Where it is doing several of these things at once, the agency needs to be clear on handoff and extraction points.

To date, Te Manatū Waka's modest size and its Wellington-based location have meant that it can be run - and has been run - in a manner akin to that of a small family firm. It has taken pride in its collegial culture and flat organisational structure.

Against the backdrop of the changing operating environment and increasing expectations, this small firm approach is not likely to be sustainable in the medium term. Relationships and individual or team acts of heroism will not be enough to secure the results required. There is a serious risk, in this challenging operating context, that the sound performance to date will not be sustained.

What has got Te Manatū Waka to this point, will not get it from here.



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Debbie Francis

May 2022