

Managing the MfE transition to MCERT

This paper proposes how we will manage merger activity for MfE; working in with the IMO. It focuses on activity specific to MfE and decisions that will need to be made by Te Pūrengi.

Note that this proposal will be adaptive to requirements from the IMO as it is stood up.

For discussion Tuesday 27 January 2026.

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Recommendations

#	Recommendation
a)	Agree to stand up the Merger team (see slide 5)
b)	Agree the proposed structure and lines of responsibilities for the merger team (see slide 5)
c)	Agree that the MfE Merger Lead may contract specific skilled resource as required (see slide 5)
d)	Agree that Te Pūrengi establish a new monthly stand-up for all people leaders to keep them informed of Ministry-wide activity, including the merger (see slide 7)
e)	Note the proposed Guiding Principles (slide 6) and indicate if you wish to allocate time to discuss these further
f)	Note the Next Steps set out on slide 8.

Why we're here

You have asked for advice on how we can be prepared for the establishment of MCERT and the wind-down of MfE.

We want to ensure that our people are looked after, our relationships are well managed and that information we provide is sound, and will stand MCERT in good stead.

MfE requires strong leadership, governance and coordination for activities required to support:

- MCERT establishment;
- the close-down activities of MfE; and
- transition and delivery beyond 1 July.

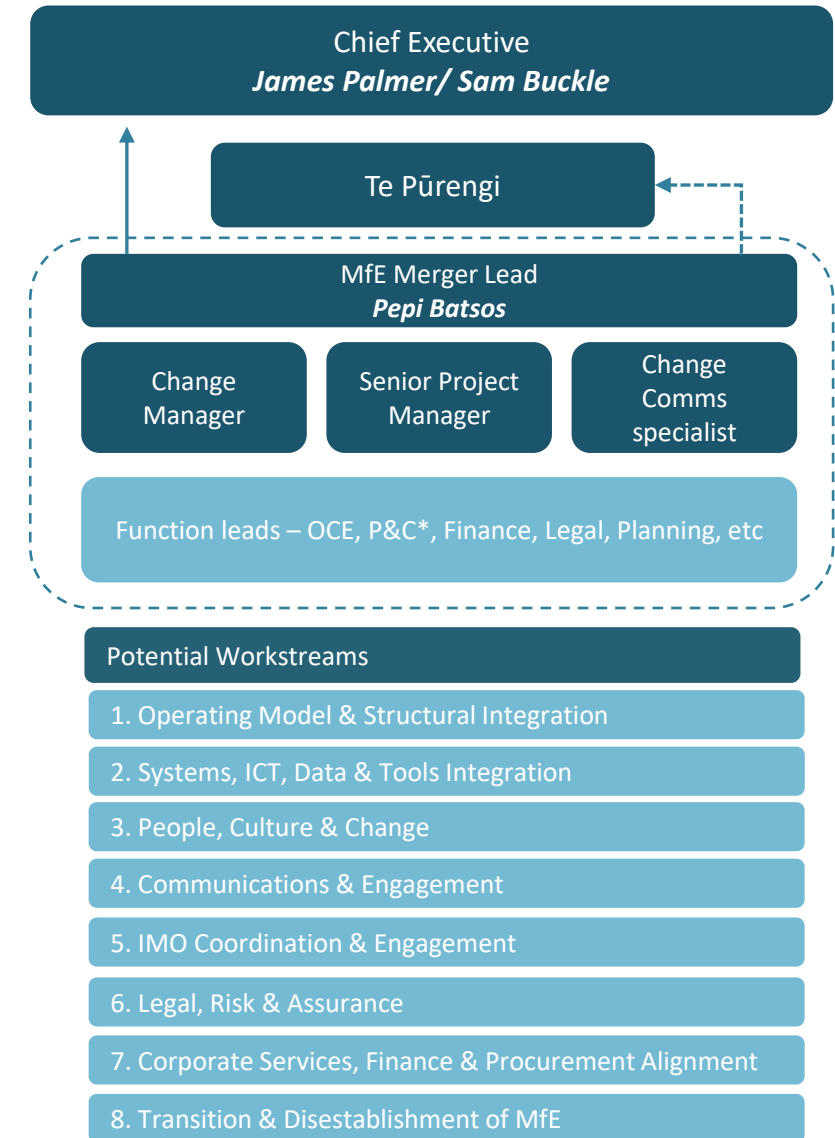
MfE will also need a single source of truth for the information that will come in from the IMO, and that is submitted back to the IMO. Information requests will also come in from other agencies, Parliament, and through official information request channels.

This paper provides a structure and sets out what is needed in order to effectively manage this organisational priority.

Proposed MfE Merger team

Purpose: The MfE Merger team will lead and manage activity within MfE that relates to the transition to MCERT

- A dedicated team will be responsible for leading, managing and coordinating merger activity across MfE, and with the IMO. This will ensure a single source of truth, provides clear accountability, consistent decision making, strong governance alignment and enables rapid mobilisation.
- The Chief Executive will be the Executive Sponsor to enable rapid support, unified control, and strong oversight particularly in relation to IMO activity. Te Pūrengi will have a governance role in terms of the overarching activity required to support a successful merger. Pepi Batsos (GM Transformation & Operations) will lead the delivery of the merger activity for MfE.
- Initially the team will be resourced by current employees – the core Transformation & Change team will pivot to this work as we stand up the office, and specialist expertise will be provided from the core functions (OCE, P&C, Finance, etc).
 - There is an immediate need for three roles – Change Manager, Senior Project Manager and Change Comms specialist, and we ask that Te Pūrengi support these additional roles to be contracted if they cannot be resourced internally.
- The Merger Lead will engage with Te Pūrengi at least fortnightly. This is expected to increase as we approach 30 June.
- Reports will be provided to the Executive Sponsor, Te Pūrengi, and the IMO as required.
- For the merger to be successful (this includes the 'wind down' of MfE) the team needs to be across all requests and activities. This helps ensure that we are connected and don't duplicate effort, we work seamlessly with what is needed and what will be delivered by the IMO, and that we avoid wherever possible things falling through the cracks.
- *This will be a huge Ministry wide effort and we have an opportunity to harness the excitement of those that want to be involved.*



***Note:** COO is working through specific P&C/employment capability needs with CE.

Potential guiding principles for the transition

At the Away Day, you noted the importance of having core principles is valuable to set intentions, guide behaviour and maintain focus. These principles are provided to you as an example of what they could be. Consideration will also need to be given to any principles that the IMO are working towards.

1. Do you want to have guiding principles?
2. Would you like to allocate time in the future to discuss these further?

Communicating and engagement with MfE

Where possible we will communicate through existing channels, as part of broader MfE oriented messaging. Using existing channels will ground the communications in all of the priority activity underway, with the aim of ensuring our people are supported and not overwhelmed in the lead-up to 1 July.

A page on Te Taiao and an Ask Us Anything email address have already been set up, so that kaimahi can freely access information already available.

Groups	Frequency
Tiers 2 and 3	Regularly through already existing mechanisms (Te Pūrengi Start Up, Te Pūrengi Governance, T3 Stand Up)
All people leaders	Monthly <i>New – would likely become more frequent in lead-up to 1 July</i>
All kaimahi	Monthly through Kotahitanga and tactical when needed through CE newsletters, blogs, etc

Core messaging by month (draft WIP until clearer instruction from IMO)

January	IMO is being established and CE on assignment & Head of IMO is being recruited
February	- MfE Merger team is now the central point of contact for information relating to the transition to MCERT - We need to be documenting our current state, who are our key relationships partners, who owns the relationships. - Are there any questions or decisions we require from our leaders or the IMO in relation to our business functions and accountabilities?
March	- Chief Executive on assignment appointed and onboard - Continue to document our current state and raise any questions or decisions required.
April	Here are some of the decisions that have been made and what it means for you
May	Here is what our external partners need to know and by when
June	This is what day 1 will look like for you and here is what you need to do before day 1. <i>Note – we may hold transition-focussed sessions for all groups across June.</i>

Next steps

To stand up the MfE Merger project team we will, across the next five weeks (to end February):

- Meet with Executive Sponsor (Chief Executive) and confirm Te Pūrengi cadence for engagement
- Launch internal communications announcing the MfE Merger team
- Build out the team, tapping internal talent and bringing in contracted expertise where needed
- Run a deep-dive planning workshop with the project team
- Ask GMs to nominate their function leads
- Start delivering initial reporting to Chief Executive and Te Pūrengi
- Support the Chief Executive's engagement with the IMO, including the IMO Board.



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Appendix

Initial risk assessment with treatment plans

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Owner	Treatment Plan
People seeking information on their own	Lack of timely, centralised comms	High	Medium	MfE Merger Team – Comms Lead	Single source of truth; FAQs; Q&A channels
Competing priorities	Leaders balancing merger + BAU	High	High	Group Managers	Prioritisation; protected time; escalation path
Relationships undocumented	Partner relationships not captured	Medium	High	Functional Leads	Relationship inventory; engagement log; handovers
Centrally-led messaging gaps	Inconsistent external messaging	Medium	High	IMO – Comms	Comms calendar; templates; pre-briefs
Resource capacity risk	High workload + attrition	High	High	Merger Lead & P&C	Surge resourcing; wellbeing; capacity model
Data integrity issues	Data cleanse required	Medium	High	ICT/Data Lead	Data quality plan; validation sprints
Kaimahi falling through cracks	Inconsistent change tracking	Medium	High	P&C Team	Impact tracker; clinics; guidance packs
Distracted T2/T3s	Leadership overload	High	Medium	Tier 2/3 Leaders	Protected decision windows; triage support
BAU systems affected by change	Concurrent change pressure	Medium	High	Functional Leads	Phased transition; hypercare; readiness criteria
Unclear roles and responsibilities across MfE, IMO and MCERT	Duplicated effort, gaps in ownership, delayed decision making	Medium	High	MfE lead & Functional leads	Define a RASCI; Establish escalation pathways for decisions; regular alignment meetings
Poorly managed change	Confusion for kaimahi, reduced engagement.	Medium	High	P&C + Change Manager	Detailed change plan & impact assessment; targeted change support; integrate change-readiness into programme reporting
Lack of clarity	Ambiguity on; decisions, timeframes and future state design slows progress and reduces confidence	High	High	CE & MfE Merger Office Lead	Issue FAQs and regular updates through Te Taiao and existing channels; Transparent communications



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