

## Ashleigh Watson

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**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 April 2024 8:51 pm  
**To:** Nicholas Smith [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Cc:** James Coombes [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Subject:** No surprises: Impending voluntary redundancy process at MfE  
**Attachments:** Minister Simmonds - Voluntary Redundancy Notification 02042024.pdf

Kia ora Nicholas

Please find attached a letter to the Minister for the Environment provided under the no surprises principle.

While our Ministry is not yet embarking on a formal organisational change process, we will be announcing an invitation for expressions of interest in Voluntary Redundancy on Monday 8 April at approximately 11:15am.

MfE has been preparing, through an operating model review last year, and workforce and work programme planning in the first quarter of 2024, to be effective and efficient in our role as advisor to the Government on the environment, while also reducing in size over the coming years.

The combined impact of the government's 7.5 percent savings target, the return of \$300 million (over four years) in Resource Management (RM) funding in the mini budget, and our already declining baseline will be significant for the Ministry.

While we require budget certainty to understand the full scale of change, we have advised staff that redundancies will likely be required to right size the ministry over the next few years.

As part of our preparation, and to acknowledge feedback from the PSA and our non-unionised employees, our executive team has agreed to offer an EOI opportunity for VR prior to a formal change proposal and consultation process as soon as possible after the Budget on 30 May.

Te Pūrengi, our leadership team, retains discretion over whether to accept EOIs from permanent staff. A key criterion when assessing EOIs will be the need to retain skills and abilities critical to delivering Government priorities.

At this stage we are unable to provide estimated numbers of those who may express an interest in VR. However, we will update ministers on the numbers and outcomes as soon as possible after the EOI process has been completed. The current timeframe for this process is outlined below, along with key messages which will be provided to staff, and media if asked.

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**Key messages:**

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For any further questions, please contact Laura Dixon, Deputy Secretary Business Transformation and Services on [laura.dixon@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:laura.dixon@mfe.govt.nz) phone: s 9(2)(a)

Ngā mihi

James

### James Palmer

*Secretary for the Environment | Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Taiao*

EA: Ella Bambrough-Copeland [Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz)

Ministry for the Environment | Manatū mō te Taiao

[James.Palmer@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:James.Palmer@mfe.govt.nz) | [environment.govt.nz](http://environment.govt.nz)



Ministry for the  
**Environment**  
Manatū Mō Te Taiao





2 April 2024

Hon Penny Simmonds  
[P.Simmonds@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:P.Simmonds@ministers.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Minister,

**Re: Invitation for expressions of interest for Voluntary Redundancy (VR)**

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) will be opening an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for VR on Monday April 8 and the reasons for this decision.

MfE has been preparing, through an operating model review last year, and workforce and work programme planning in the first quarter of 2024, to be effective and efficient in our role as advisor to the Government on the environment, while also reducing in size over the coming years.

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If you have any questions please contact me on: [james.palmer@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:james.palmer@mfe.govt.nz) or [laura.dixon@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:laura.dixon@mfe.govt.nz)

Nāku noa, nā,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Palmer'.

James Palmer  
**Secretary for the Environment**

## Ashleigh Watson

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**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 April 2024 8:46 pm  
**To:** martin.kessick@publicservice.govt.nz  
**Subject:** No surprises: Impending voluntary redundancy process at MfE  
**Attachments:** Minister Willis - Voluntary Redundancy Notification 02042024.pdf

Kia ora Martin,

Thank you for your email below and the request to ensure your Minister is kept abreast of any organisational change happening across the Public Sector.

Please find attached a letter to the Minister of Public Service provided under the no surprises principle.

While our Ministry is not yet embarking on a formal organisational change process, we will be announcing an invitation for expressions of interest in Voluntary Redundancy on Monday 8 April at approximately 11:15am.

MfE has been preparing, through an operating model review last year, and workforce and work programme planning in the first quarter of 2024, to be effective and efficient in our role as advisor to the Government on the environment, while also reducing in size over the coming years.

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Ngā mihi

James

**James Palmer**

*Secretary for the Environment | Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Taiao*

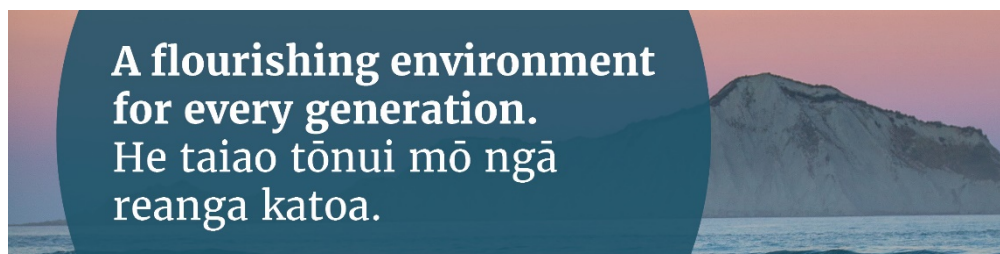
EA: Ella Bambrough-Copeland [Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz)

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Ministry for the  
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**From:** Martin Kessick <[Martin.Kessick@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:Martin.Kessick@publicservice.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 27, 2024 4:58:28 PM

**To:** James Palmer <[James.Palmer@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:James.Palmer@mfe.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** Change Updates

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora James,

As we discussed in our text exchange, I am getting in touch to update you on a request the Minister of Public Service has made of the Commission in relation to future announcements regarding organisational change occurring across Public Service agencies.

Specifically, we are seeking your support to ensure that she is informed on a no-surprises basis in advance of change processes are communicated by agencies, as no doubt you would be doing with your own Minister(s).

To this end, we are asking for an early heads up on proposals imminent for announcement or where decisions are close to being communicated to staff, unions and stakeholders, with:

- an overview of the proposed change and supporting rationale for the change
- number of impacted roles within the agency (including how many are vacant positions)
- key messages and communications your agency will be using to communicate the change.

To ensure that we are able to give our Minister sufficient advanced notice, we are asking for a heads up at least five days before announcements are made within agencies.

We will be starting regular reporting to our Minister from next week, but please let me know if you have any announcements coming out before then.

We recognise your context is complex and there are a lot of moving parts you are managing and leading your agencies through at this time. I am more than happy to discuss this request with you or your team at any point. If there is someone in your team that you would prefer me to engage with directly on this request, please let me know.

Regards

**Martin Kessick** (he/him)

**Kaikōmihana Tautāwhi** | Assistant Commissioner

Te Aromātai Whakatatutukitanga | System & Agency Performance

waea pūkoro: s 9(2)(a) | ĩmēra: [Martin.Kessick@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:Martin.Kessick@publicservice.govt.nz)



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

[www.publicservice.govt.nz](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz) | [www.govt.nz](http://www.govt.nz)



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Confidentiality notice: This email may be confidential or legally privileged. If you have received it by mistake, please tell the sender immediately by reply, remove this email and the reply from your system, and don't act on it in any other way. Ngā mihi.



Ministry for the

**Environment**

*Manatū Mō Te Taiao*

2 April 2024

Hon Nicola Willis

[N.Willis@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:N.Willis@ministers.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Minister,

**Re: Invitation for expressions of interest for Voluntary Redundancy (VR)**

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) will be opening an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for VR on Monday April 8 and the reasons for this decision.

MfE has been preparing, through an operating model review last year, and workforce and work programme planning in the first quarter of 2024, to be effective and efficient in our role as advisor to the Government on the environment, while also reducing in size over the coming years.

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Nāku noa, nā,

James Palmer  
**Secretary for the Environment**

## Ashleigh Watson

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**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Monday, 8 April 2024 10:44 am  
**To:** Regan Brash [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Subject:** No surprises: Impending voluntary redundancy process at MfE  
**Attachments:** Minister Bishop - Voluntary Redundancy Notification 08042024.pdf

Kia ora Regan

Please find attached a letter to the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform provided under the no surprises principle.

While our Ministry is not yet embarking on a formal organisational change process, we will be announcing an invitation for expressions of interest in Voluntary Redundancy today, Monday 8 April at approximately 11:15am.

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Ngā mihi

James

### James Palmer

*Secretary for the Environment | Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Taiao*

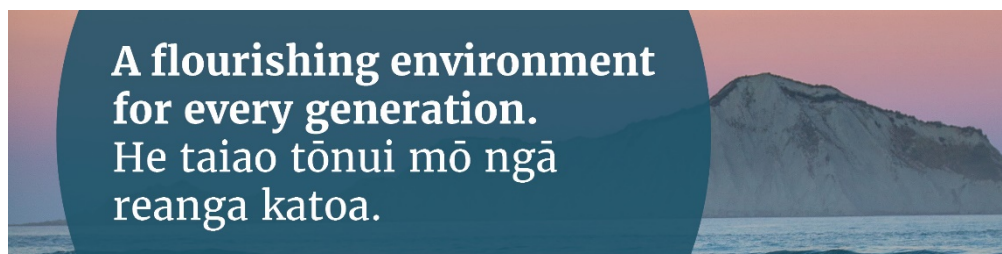
EA: Ella Bambrough-Copeland [Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz)

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Ministry for the  
**Environment**  
Manatū Mō Te Taiao





8 April 2024

Hon Chris Bishop  
[Chris.Bishop@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Chris.Bishop@parliament.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Minister,

**Re: Invitation for expressions of interest for Voluntary Redundancy (VR)**

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) will be opening an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for VR today, Monday April 8 and the reasons for this decision.

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Nāku noa, nā,

James Palmer  
**Secretary for the Environment**

## Ashleigh Watson

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**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 April 2024 4:14 pm  
**To:** 'N.Willis@ministers.govt.nz'  
**Subject:** MfE proposed changes to position descriptions and future pay

Kia ora Minister

This is to advise you, under the no surprises principle, of proposed changes to the position descriptions and future pay of some of our staff. This is an operational matter, however there is the potential for this to reach the media.

- Next week we will begin consulting with chief and principal advisor cohorts on proposals that would see most of their remuneration bands moving down a level, in line with most other agencies. This would result in a pay freeze for most of these staff.
- All future chief and principal advisors will be appointed at the lower bands. This includes a Chief Advisor Māori Policy which we are shortlisting for now. This position was advertised at the higher band, and we will be advising short listed candidates of the new pay band next week.
- We are also proposing changes for Team Leaders which could affect where they are located in the band and may mean small pay increases for some of these staff.

We have advised the PSA and prepared reactive public messaging. We will stress the proposed changes are about fairness within the public sector and are unrelated to fiscal savings or budget considerations.

I'm happy to provide further details if you require them.

Ngā mihi,  
James

### James Palmer

*Secretary for the Environment | Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Taiao*

EA: Ella Bambrough-Copeland [Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz)

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Ministry for the  
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**A flourishing environment  
for every generation.**  
He taiao tōnui mō ngā  
reanga katoa.

## Ashleigh Watson

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**Sent:** Friday, 19 April 2024 4:14 pm  
**To:** 'simon.watts@parliament.govt.nz'  
**Cc:** James Coombes [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Subject:** MfE proposed changes to position descriptions and future pay

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EA: Ella Bambrough-Copeland [Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz)

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James

### James Palmer

*Secretary for the Environment | Te Tumu Whakarāe mō te Taiao*

EA: Ella Bambrough-Copeland [Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:Ella.Bambrough-Copeland@mfe.govt.nz)

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## Ashleigh Watson

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**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 April 2024 4:13 pm  
**To:** 'Chris.Bishop@parliament.govt.nz'  
**Cc:** Regan Brash [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Subject:** MfE proposed changes to position descriptions and future pay

Kia ora Minister

This is to advise you, under the no surprises principle, of proposed changes to the position descriptions and future pay of some of our staff. This is an operational matter, however there is the potential for this to reach the media.

- Next week we will begin consulting with chief and principal advisor cohorts on proposals that would see most of their remuneration bands moving down a level, in line with most other agencies. This would result in a pay freeze for most of these staff.
- All future chief and principal advisors will be appointed at the lower bands. This includes a Chief Advisor Māori Policy which we are shortlisting for now. This position was advertised at the higher band, and we will be advising short listed candidates of the new pay band next week.
- We are also proposing changes for Team Leaders which could affect where they are located in the band and may mean small pay increases for some of these staff.

We have advised the PSA and prepared reactive public messaging. We will stress the proposed changes are about fairness within the public sector and are unrelated to fiscal savings or budget considerations.

I'm happy to provide further details if you require them.

Ngā mihi,  
James

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8:18



New iMessage

Cancel

To: Chris Bishop

Thu, 6 Jun at 3:31 PM

How did the announcement land yesterday?

About as well as we could hope for, we've been well planned and our people well primed. People get the fiscal context and weren't too surprised. The big reductions are in the senior analyst/advisor cohort where we are overweight relative to public sector benchmarks and so that's where the anxiety is. This is also the engine room of the grunt work on policy advice so managers are wary of delivery risk through the next few months where we are running to ambitious timeframes. Cumulatively across our ministers we have as much work on as we did before the funding reductions so we will need to do some prioritisation!

Thu, 6 Jun at 4:59 PM



iMessage



8:18



New iMessage

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To: Chris Bishop

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Thu, 6 Jun at 4:59 PM

Conscious of that. Would it be helpful if Penny me Andrew and Simon got together with you and Nadeine and senior team to prioritise a bit?

I don't want people being run ragged - rather focus on fewer high quality products

That would be very helpful, thank you



iMessage



8:19



New iMessage

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To: Chris Bishop

Thu, 27 Jun at 3:52 PM

out of scope

On our financials I recognise the severity of the govts fiscal position and so accept that draw down of the wage pressure contingency from Budget 22 is almost certainly a non starter, even with Tsy support. We will absorb the pressure and the out-year affordable workforce will just get smaller. We do think we are going to really struggle to deliver a large phase 2 programme, as well as phase 3 with the scaled RM funding. The ability to carry forward some underspend from



iMessage



8:19



New iMessage

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To: Chris Bishop

get smaller. We do think we are going to really struggle to deliver a large phase 2 programme, as well as phase 3 with the scaled RM funding. The ability to carry forward some underspend from our existing appropriation would make a huge difference. At the very least carrying forward the \$3.6m from 22/23 would give us something to fund the Phase 3 expert advisory panel, a secretariat and bill drafting resources.

I'm sorry to add to the fiscal burdens given how challenging things are for ministers but we have already had a decent crack at cutting back and I'm going to hit real limits on how far I can push it before failing to deliver for you.

Thanks for convening Monday's discussion, it was much appreciated. Hope you get some family time on the weekend,  
James



iMessage



## Ashleigh Watson

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**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 July 2024 5:17 pm  
**To:** Penny.Simmonds@parliament.govt.nz  
**Cc:** Devina Shetty [EXTERNAL] (Parliament); Sukie Paras [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Subject:** Update on final decisions following consultation

Kia ora Minister

This email is to update you on final decisions following consultation with staff on our proposed Ministry reset - released for feedback in June.

I will be outlining these decisions to MfE staff next Thursday at 11am and will provide a summary update on our website shortly afterward.

You may recall the original proposal was to reduce our full time equivalent (FTE) staff from 993 FTEs as of late May, to 690 in 2025/26. Following consistent staff feedback about risks to our ability to deliver our work programme with the scaled back resources, I have agreed a small (2.4%) increase in permanent staffing over that initially proposed. This is well short of the increases sought by staff.

I have carefully evaluated the criticality of this additional investment and I am satisfied it is necessary to manage unacceptable risks to delivering on the government's priorities and our statutory obligations. MfE will pay for this by reducing the pool of funding available for discretionary non-FTE expenses, particularly funding for contractors and consultants.

The details are as follows:

- For the current financial year, I have agreed to an increase of 24 roles from that in our initial proposal - giving a total of 836 FTE (of which 128.5 will be time limited transitional roles).
- For the 2025/26 year we will start with 714 FTEs reducing to 707.5 FTE by January 2026, when the remaining time limited transitional roles end. This amounts to an increase of 17.5 permanent roles on that initially proposed.
- Overall, the final figures represent an approximate 30 percent reduction in FTE staff by July 2026 from the 997 we had in late May this year.
- When looking at funded FTEs for the 2023/24 financial year, our staffing reduces by 42 percent by 2025/26. This difference is largely due to our recruitment controls as we managed our FTEs down this year in anticipation of a decline in our baseline funding over the next four years.
- We have also made some adjustments to seniority across our cohorts, which helps to mitigate some of the cost of the increased staffing.

While our budget will be tight over the next couple of years, I'm confident this level of staffing will enable us to deliver your priorities and our statutory obligations while actively managing risks, within our budget constraints. This includes increased scrutiny and accountability expected of budget holders to deliver within budgets, coupled with quarterly review and reprioritisation across the business to ensure funds are allocated to the highest priorities and expended in a timely manner.

I'm happy to provide more information at any time.

Nga mihi, nā  
James

**James Palmer**

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## Ashleigh Watson

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**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 July 2024 5:16 pm  
**To:** christopher.bishop@parliament.govt.nz  
**Cc:** Regan Brash [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT); Sarah King [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Subject:** Update on final decisions following consultation

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## Ashleigh Watson

---

**From:** Ella Bambrough-Copeland on behalf of James Palmer  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 July 2024 5:15 pm  
**To:** Simon.Watts@parliament.govt.nz  
**Cc:** James Coombes [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT); Jamie Molea [EXTERNAL] (Parliament); Helena Terry [EXTERNAL] (PARLIAMENT)  
**Subject:** Update on final decisions following consultation

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