

**From:** [Davinia Gazzard-Steele](#) on behalf of [James Palmer](#)  
**To:** [All Remote Staff](#); [All RM and NABS managers](#); [All Staff Auckland](#); [All Staff Christchurch](#); [All Staff Gisborne](#); [All Staff Wellington](#)  
**Subject:** [STAFF IN-CONFIDENCE]Operating Model media query  
**Date:** Friday, 22 September 2023 7:47:02 am

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Kia ora e te whānau,

Thank you for the great turnout on Wednesday, and your contribution to the operating model review so far.

I wanted to briefly update you that we have had a media enquiry about the operating model review which I responded to last night.

The journalist had a copy of the review document and comment from one of our kaimahi. As a result, I have provided some context around why we have undertaken the review, with our baseline funding decreasing over the next three years, and time limited funding coming to an end. I've been explicit that proposals are currently being consulted on and no final decisions have yet been made. I also highlighted in our response how hard our people have worked to deliver important environmental reforms, which doesn't come through in the story.

The story also doesn't give any sense of the number of vacancies we are carrying and that we can make the proposed reductions in roles through minimal impact on our permanent staff. I know many of you are worried about workloads and the reductions making this worse. I am super conscious of everyone's wellbeing and very focussed on how we can make changes to reduce and prioritise our workload and better support you in your work. Making the Ministry more sustainable in its work is front and centre of the review.

I'm saddened one of our colleagues has chosen to speak to the media given we are currently consulting, with ample opportunities for concerns to be raised, and given how open and candid I have been throughout the process. I encourage everyone to provide feedback on the proposals and the operating model as a whole, using the [online feedback form](#). As I said on Wednesday, I'm sure we haven't got everything right.

I know that change is stressful and that many of you will be feeling anxious while we have a period of uncertainty, I feel this too. If you are feeling at all worried or concerned, please talk to your manager. Free, confidential counselling is also available through our EAP services.

We have so much critically important mahi to do for our country with great people and resources, so there is much to be grateful for and look forward to. I have every confidence that with your ideas and input we will make the Ministry stronger and more impactful with the finite resources we have.

Have a great weekend.

Ngā mihi nui,

James

**James Palmer**

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

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