

Hon Jan Tinetti

Minister of Internal Affairs
Minister for Women
Associate Minister of Education



21 MAY 2021

David Shanks
Board Chair
Office of Film and Literature Classification
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Wellington 6140

Tēnā koe David

Thank you for leading the Classification Office in 2020/21. I acknowledge the work undertaken by the Classification Office to deliver its core functions to a high standard through the difficult circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to thank the Classification Office staff for their commitment to classification and censorship matters during a time of increasing demands on, and changes in, the wider system.

My expectations of the Classification Office in 2021/22 are set out below

I recognise that the Classification Office is working in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment and social context. With this in mind, my priorities broadly focus on Board performance, strategic direction and stewardship, and organisational health and performance.

General expectations

Board members must adhere to Board policies and guidance on conflicts of interest, and respect collective decisions and responsibility. Please advise me if there are any potential, emerging or actual conflicts.

I expect you to maintain a “no surprises” policy, and for you to inform me well in advance of any material, event, transactions, or other issues, that could be considered contentious or attract wide public interest, whether positive or negative.

At all times, I expect the Classification Office to operate with full transparency and financial prudence. This includes ensuring that:

- communications with the workforce are clear, transparent, and frequent, to provide clarity and minimise uncertainty;
- frameworks are applied to guide and assess value for money from expenditure, and consider efficiencies as part of business and project planning; and
- prudent financial management is demonstrated, and the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) and my office are informed of, and the Department is involved in, substantive issues.

I expect the Classification Office to continue to engage constructively with the Department about opportunities, challenges or barriers to achieving organisational outcomes and the expectations in this Letter.



Board performance

With the upcoming expected appointment of a Deputy Chief Censor to the Board, I expect the Board to undertake regular reviews of performance, and ensure there is appropriate separation between governance and management decisions. In a small agency where statutory officers have multiple roles, it is important that there is role clarity and that staff and regulated parties understand how decisions are made and regulatory powers are exercised.

Strategic direction and stewardship

I acknowledge that this is an area that needs to be responsive to changes to the global context. At a general level, I expect the Board to:

- inform the Department of the impacts on the Classification Office and the industry of recent changes to the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993;
- contribute, as appropriate, to the work being led by the Department to develop media content legislation and regulation;
- continue the Classification Office's public education initiatives and research to inform classification decisions and the prevention of harm from media content; and
- continue to collaborate positively and constructively with agencies, and participate in cross-government work impacting on the media industry and consumers.

Organisational health and performance

As a small office operating with a demanding workload, strong organisational performance and culture are critical to ensuring that the core activities of the Classification Office can be met. My expectation is that this is demonstrated through:

- close monitoring of the Classification Office's financial performance, at all times;
- ensuring that regulatory practices, operating policies and processes reflect the current environment and best practice;
- adherence to central agency guidance when preparing your core accountability documents, such as the Statement of Intent, Statement of Performance Expectations and Annual Report;
- engaging with the Department about issues and risks that may be indicated in the reports; and
- ensuring that I receive drafts and final versions of documents within the required timeframes.

Government's Letter of Enduring Expectations for Crown entities

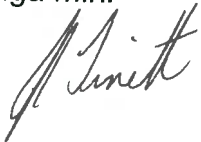
On 19 October 2019, the Minister of Finance, Hon Grant Robertson, and the Minister for the Public Service, Hon Chris Hipkins, issued a Letter of Enduring Expectations.¹

Key priorities include a unified, value-based government for all New Zealanders, supporting future-focussed Māori Crown relationships, and contributing to improving wellbeing. Please consider the expectations outlined and incorporate them into your planning, strategic direction, and accountability documents.

You are also expected to continue to take account of the Government's Expectations on Employment Relations in the Public Sector.

I look forward to continuing to work with you during the coming year.

Ngā mihi



Hon Jan Tinetti
Minister of Internal Affairs

¹ The enduring Letter of Expectation is available on the Public Services Commission website here:
<https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/enduring-letter-of-expectations-to-statutory-crown-entities-2019/>