

## MEDIA STATEMENT

12 December 2024

### **Te Arawhiti announces final decisions on change proposals**

The Interim Chief Executive of The Office for Māori Crown Relations - Te Arawhiti Anaru Mill has announced final decisions on two change proposals to staff today.

The first proposal implements Cabinet's decision to transfer the Māori Crown relations functions to Te Puni Kōkiri, and the other is on the redesign of Te Arawhiti.

Following the transfer of functions on 24 February 2025 Te Arawhiti will focus on resolving historical Treaty of Waitangi claims and Takutai Moana (Marine and Coastal Area) determinations.

Mr Mill says the announcements today will give staff certainty on their roles and options ahead of the end-of-year break.

"I want to acknowledge how challenging this process has been for our staff, particularly those who have been impacted by the change proposals and today's final decisions.

"The staff at Te Arawhiti have shown the utmost professionalism in continuing to deliver on our strategic priorities of restoring, sustaining, and growing the Māori Crown relationship during this tumultuous time."

Te Arawhiti consulted staff throughout November on the transfer and redesign change proposals and received 74 submissions - 54 on the redesign proposal and 20 on the transfer proposal.

Mr Mill says: "The high level of engagement during consultation is a testament to the commitment of our staff to our kaupapa. The feedback received by staff was highly constructive and has shaped our final decisions."

Ministers took decisions to transfer the Māori Crown relations functions from Te Arawhiti to Te Puni Kōkiri in October. The two agencies are working closely to ensure that those decisions are implemented as carefully and efficiently as possible.

All staff moving to Te Puni Kōkiri will maintain employment terms and conditions no less favourable than their current agreements.

Mr Mill says one of the main aims for the final decisions has been to keep staff employed wherever possible while ensuring Te Arawhiti has been right sized for its budget and more focused functions.

"For the redesign of Te Arawhiti, 49 roles will be disestablished, 28 of which are vacant, and nine new roles will be established. Affected staff will have the first option to apply for new and vacant positions.

“The redesigned Te Arawhiti will have a sharpened focus on progressing Treaty settlements and supporting Takutai Moana determinations. After the transfer in February 2025, our agency will be streamlined to ensure that we can deliver on that core work,” he says.

Te Arawhiti and Te Puni Kōkiri have worked closely together on the transfer proposal and decisions.

Mr Mill says: “To make these changes successful for Māori and the Crown, we will need to stay in lockstep going forward. It’s important that iwi Māori have confidence in the government’s ability to collectively uphold their Treaty settlements, rights and interests, and that we can demonstrate what it takes to uphold the mana of the Crown.”

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## EDITOR’S NOTES

Te Arawhiti is, and will remain, a departmental agency, hosted by the Ministry of Justice. It was established in December 2018 and currently has two responsible Ministers: Treaty Negotiations Minister Paul Goldsmith, and Māori Crown Relations Minister Tama Potaka.

After the transfer of Māori Crown relations functions to Te Puni Kōkiri on 24 February 2025, Treaty Negotiations Minister Paul Goldsmith will be its sole Minister.

### *Clarifying the functions*

In August 2024, Cabinet announced an in-principle decision to transfer some of the functions of Te Arawhiti to Te Puni Kōkiri.

In October 2024, Ministers Willis, Goldsmith and Potaka confirmed the following functions will be transferred from Te Arawhiti to Te Puni Kōkiri:

- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of Treaty settlement commitments
- leading post-settlement relationships
- coordinating significant events on behalf of the Crown
- providing strategic advice on the distinct rights, interests, and responsibilities of iwi, hapū and Māori, except as they relate to Treaty settlement and Takutai Moana matters; and
- ensuring the Public Service has the capability to engage effectively with Māori.

The Ministers confirmed the following functions will remain with Te Arawhiti:

- completing historical Treaty settlements
- administering the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 and Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019
- providing strategic advice on Māori rights and interests as it relates to Treaty settlements and Takutai Moana determinations.