

NEW ZEALAND MARINE SCIENCES SOCIETY

TE HUNGA MĀTAI MOANA O AOTEAROA



Hon. Steven Joyce
Parliament House
Wellington
s.joyce@ministers.govt.nz

Wednesday, 2 May 2012

RESPONSE TO THE RECENT FORMATION OF THE MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Dear Minister:

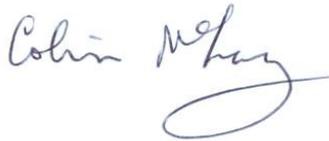
On behalf of the New Zealand Marine Science Society and in accordance with similar issues raised by the Royal Society of New Zealand, I would like to express our concern with the recent omission of the words 'science' or 'research' in the newly formed Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. We understand the need for, and support changes in government structure where efficiencies can be made without loss of important and vital skills and services. We also welcome the clear signals from the Ministry that scientific research will remain a driving force in developing and sustaining a strong economy through closer partnerships and connections with business innovation. The society sees this as essential in terms of growing our economy, in ensuring we can credibly live up to our sustainability agenda and in providing for evidence-based decision making. Given the importance of tourism, the potential for future development, the provision of good and services, the cultural significance and high biodiversity, marine ecosystems must surely take center stage.

We recognise there are many perspectives on judging the value of any scientific endeavor, but the value of environmental research is critical. As a maritime nation, the resilience of our communities is directly linked to the health of our surrounding seas. Our overall economy ultimately depends on sustainable brands that capitalise on New Zealand's clean green image. Through valuation exercises, the NZ Ministry for the Environment has stated our clean green image is likely to be worth hundreds of millions, and possibly billions of dollars per year. Environmental research is critical to sustaining this image and underpinning wise decision making and development of policy that protects and sustains our environment and in turn our economy.

A long term vision is fundamental to management of the sea. In the establishment of the new super ministry, we would like to emphasise the importance of not losing sight of the importance of environmental research in the marine environment. The importance of such research is becoming increasingly apparent in the face of oil, gas and minerals exploration and exploitation. New Zealand has an opportunity to develop world-leading ocean governance and policy, which in turn requires

sustained investment in strategic marine scientific research. The society thinks that our coasts and oceans warrant a specific ministerial focus to maximize economic, social and environmental returns. We look forward to the opportunity of discussing such an agenda with you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colin McLay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the name.

Associate Professor Colin McLay
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