

Paterson Oration

Sydney, 7 March 2018

Peter Hughes

E ngā mana, e ngā iwi, e ngā rau rangatira mā.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

I greet you in te reo Māori – the language of the indigenous people of New Zealand.

I acknowledge you as individuals of standing.

I acknowledge, in particular, your families and the peoples from whom you have come here tonight.

I acknowledge you as leaders of our cause.

To all of you, my greetings. Kia ora koutou katoa.

He's not here, but, I do want to thank Uncle Ray Davison for his very warm and very special welcome here tonight. It's important that you do this, and very special that he did.

I'd also like, myself, to acknowledge the Gadigal people, and the elders of the Eora Nation and to extend my respects to them.

I also would like to acknowledge Dr John Paterson, a founding member of ANZSOG and one of Australia's most esteemed public servants and extraordinary thinkers.

We honour his commitment to the ideal of public service. It is a great pleasure and absolute privilege to deliver this oration today, especially with John's family here. His wife, Mary, I want to acknowledge you, and also Szofi, his daughter. I think it is very special having you both here.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge the ANZSOG Board and other members of the ANZSOG family – Dean Professor Ken Smith – and all of you associated with ANZSOG in various ways, and especially our prize winners. Welcome and thank you for coming tonight.

Kia ora Koutou katoa.

So, let me start by just saying simply this, and that is I really do believe in the ideal of public service. I really do believe in the "spirit of service" that our New Zealand State Sector Act talks about. While, perhaps it's an old-fashioned word, I really do believe that it is a noble thing to choose to serve your country and your fellow citizens, as your career. Like all public servants, like many of you in this room, I chose to do that, myself, because I care, and I want to make a difference. We all do. I believe that public service is something that we should acknowledge, celebrate and reward. All too often, that doesn't happen, and all too often, the reverse happens. I find that very sad.

Many of you in this room have made a commitment to public service, and while, we might each talk about it in different ways, at some level, I think, we're all meaning the same thing. So, let me talk a little bit about what it means to me. For me, public service is about three things:

- The first thing is putting the needs of others first; putting others first. It's about opening our hearts, and our minds and our resources and our time and our energies to the needs of others. It's about being totally focused on the customer, client or citizen.
- Secondly, it's also about bringing the right attitude to that. Not that we are subservient in any way, but we approach our work with humility and the desire to serve others. To be of service to others.
- Finally, for me, it's absolutely about having a higher purpose. It's about being motivated by something bigger than ourselves. The desire to use our skills and our talents to make our world, our country, our families, our communities, a better place.

I want to, also, start by sharing a little bit about my story. We all come to public service in different ways, and I'm one of those people who fell into public service. I was at university doing two co-joined degrees. I did a degree in English Literature in French Language – you can get a long way in the public service with French language. But, I was also doing a law degree. In those days, we had to pay our way through university by working in the holidays; all of the holidays, every day of the holidays. I was very lucky in getting a permanent job at the old Department of Social Welfare in New Zealand. They put me on the front desk, and I loved that work. I absolutely loved that work.

I used to look forward to the holidays. I used to look forward to working on the front desk. They put me on the front desk of the dole office, because in those days, women weren't allowed to work in the dole office; it was regarded as too rough. So, they put me there out front. What happened for me, was the counter point between that and studying law – I'd finished the other degree – just became too big for me. It just became too big for me, personally. I just couldn't see myself being a lawyer, I couldn't see myself doing trust in the State Planning for the rest of my life. But, I could see myself doing what it was I did at the old Department of Social Welfare, because I thought I was making a difference.

I found the work hugely meaningful, and I thought I was making a difference. So, I dropped out of the law degree, and I went on permanent staff, and stayed out on the frontline for a number of years. A short time later, I got a job on the Domestic Purposes Benefits Division; this is the outfit that pays sole parents. This was a promotion, because that was more complicated work. The very wise woman who was the section head, sent me out with the Home Visit Officer to visit these sole parents in their homes. We used to do that every time somebody applied for benefits. I don't know about Australia, but, in New Zealand, this is a group of individuals who are very stigmatised in the community, and you see and hear and read a lot of really negative and awful stuff about them.

But, that was not what I saw. What I saw when I had the privilege of going into their homes, was women struggling. I saw courage, I saw determination and I saw a heap of love. The thing that I learned doing that job, the really important thing that I learned

doing that job, that has served me well all through my time working in welfare, is that there is nobody in this world who cares more for a child, than their parent. Whatever it is that you hear about people on benefits, that is true. So, that, for me, was a huge privilege, and it was really meaningful.

That was when I decided to make public service my career. I stayed in that organisation for quite a long part of my career, and as Dame Karen [Sewell] has said, I ended up having the privilege of leading it. One of the things, I think, that we don't do enough, these days, is talk about that stuff. Talk about why we are here. Talk about the values that drive us. Talk about the higher moral purpose. One of the reasons for that, is our experience in the public service, I guess, around the world, but, certainly in New Zealand, over the last 30 years.

In New Zealand in the early 1990s, the Public Service State Services under went huge reform. These were very radical market orientated reforms. I was a huge advocate of these reforms, and I still am. But, one of the things that happened with the reforms in New Zealand, is we shifted our focus away from the public service, as a whole, on to our own individual agencies. These days, in New Zealand, if you asked somebody where they worked, and they were a public servant, they would not say that they're a public servant, they would say that they work for a particular agency. They would say that they were a social worker for the Ministry of Health, or a probation officer in the Department of Corrections.

They wouldn't say they were a public servant. With the reforms, we shifted our focus on to the individual agencies. I do think we lost a sense of being part of something bigger, with a higher purpose, with a moral purpose, and in many ways, I think, we lost our heart. Like I'm doing here tonight, since I've been in this job – and I've been in this job nearly two years now – I start every single speech, no matter what the audience, what the event, what the topic is, by talking about this stuff. I always get a hugely positive response to it. Always. Even from private sector audiences, I get a hugely positive response. That is because, I think, I'm articulating something that everybody believes in, or wants to believe in, but nobody says anymore. I think we need to start saying it.

In March of last year, about nine months after I took up this job, we held a Public Service Leaders Summit in Wellington. As incoming Head of State Services, I thought I should front up and I thought I should talk about what I'm about, and I thought I should talk about my ambition for us, in the public service. We hired the biggest venue we could, and we filled it with as many people as we could. We had about seven or eight hundred public service leaders in this huge big venue. We spent the morning of the day, reflecting on why we had signed up to public service. I asked them that question. We also talked about the Spirit of Service and what that means to each of us. Just as I've shared with you, each of those individuals shared with each other, how it was that they came to be a public servant, and then when it was that they decided to make public service their career.

The stories that we heard were inspiring, humbling and very often moving. We didn't plan to do this, but, what we decided to do on the day, was get some of those people up onto the stage – a huge big stage with hundreds of people in this venue with big screens and microphones – to share their stories. And they did. For about an hour, there was a queue on either side of that stage, of people wanting to come up and talk

about this stuff and talk about why they were public servants and how they came to be here, and in particular, the Spirit of Service. We haven't got time for me to show you those stories, but, I am going to show you some of those New Zealand public servants talking about the Spirit of Service.

Video Vignettes

Naomi Fergusson, IRD:

"The Spirit of Service for me, is all about integrity. We've got to have integrity in everything we do to help the people of New Zealand have fantastic lives."

Peter Crisp, NZTE:

"It's about the sense of ultimately, it's not about me, it's about the country. So, it's a sense in which you're working for something that's beyond me and something that's in service to something else."

Morag Ingram, DIA:

"The projects that you get to work on are just so diverse and span every community in New Zealand. You come to work feeling like you are really making a difference to New Zealand, and to New Zealanders, and to all the people who live here, and it's a really strong heart connection."

Matafanua [Hilda] Fa'asalele, MoH :

"That's what I love about being a public servant, is that I have an opportunity to make a difference, just because I'm in the room, and just because of what I bring to the conversations that we have, that are going to make a difference for this nation."

Paul James, MCH:

"I think the first point is that the public should expect something of us. We need to help them have high expectations of us, to set standards for us to deliver to."

AJ Millward, MBIE Pike River Agency:

"There are a lot of things that I really missed from being in the public service, empathy and understanding, and remembering that you are dealing with people."

Hilda, MoH:

"Our life is not about self, it's really about what we can do to make lives much better."

Morag

"I work for my country, and I'm incredibly ambitious and aspirational for what this country can be and for the people who live here. That, to me, is the ultimate job."

Allan:

"What I've learnt over that 30 years, is that us working together collectively, making sure that we're open and transparent and effective, can make a significant difference for all New Zealanders."

Ray Smith, Corrections:

"I think the opportunity to make change in people's lives is such a huge thing, and something that, often, I think, is underestimated. When you get to run a large public service organisation, you really get to feel how much authority you've got to change lives and to shape the futures of the people that you deal with."

Allan:

"It's really hard to corrupt your democracy if you've got a hardworking, honest, effective and efficient public service."

Rebecca Kitteridge:

"The Spirit of Service is the question about why are we here? Why are we here, is to make a difference for New Zealanders, in whatever area we work in. At the end of day, all of us, all the time, should be thinking does this make a difference, and does this make the lives of New Zealanders better?"

Paul:

"Plus for me, it's about doing the right thing. I think, for the spirit of service, it's recognising that these are jobs, but, they actually contribute so much, and it's believing in it and wanting to be part of that, and just doing the right thing for people in our country."

You notice, they're all talking about the Spirit of Service. We're starting to talk about the Spirit of Service in New Zealand. These are all, salt of the earth, public servants talking about that, and why they do these jobs. Back in the venue in Wellington, as I listened to them, I realised that the Spirit of Service is alive and well in the New Zealand Public Service. I realised that it was deeply felt, is deeply felt, and held by the people who choose to work in our public service. I realised that that particular baby was not thrown out with the bath water of the 1990s reform.

It is there, but we are not fostering it, we are not nurturing it, and we are not leveraging it. So, I say, it's time to start talking about it. All of us. But, especially those of us called to public service, and called to leadership in the public service. We're often criticised, and we often get down about that, but, if we're not clear about why we're here and what we believe in, how can we expect anybody else to believe in us. For those of us who are leaders, that call starts with us. We need to articulate, communicate and model the ideal of public service and the spirit of service. We need to acknowledge it and reward it wherever we see it in action. And it needs to be absolutely fundamental to our expectations of our staff, their work and the motivation that they bring to it.

We've started talking about the spirit of service in New Zealand. I say, let's do it.

Let me talk a little bit, now, about the public service and its constitutional role, because this is part of it. I'm not one of those who believes that the public service is simply the delivery arm of the executive branch of Government. I am somebody who believes the public service is a special part of our constitutional democracy. I often refer to the public service as a constitutional artefact. For me, it's part of the constitutional architecture that guarantees our form of government and its legitimacy. For me, there are four things that underpin the public service in that constitutional role. I call them the "Foundational

Pillars” because, pretty much, everything else proceeds from that. There's are things that are really precious and, I think, we need to pay some attention to.

- The first is political neutrality.
- The second is free, frank and fearless advice.
- The third is merit appointments. We all take that for granted, but, it's really important.
- The fourth is open Government.

I believe it is the responsibility of each generation of public service leadership, to nurture and protect these. I'll talk about three of them just very briefly.

Political neutrality is, I think, the absolute bottom line to assuring and enduring career public service in the Westminster tradition. But, it's something that is under pressure in various ways in most jurisdictions. So, for me, there is a line. Politicians respect public servants who go down to the line, but not over it. Politicians put themselves out there every day. There's nothing tainted about politics, in my view. Politics is democracy in action, and our politicians put themselves out there every day. But, they don't respect public servants who stay closeted in an ivory tower of neutrality or independence, who take no risks, who sit on the hill looking down on the line lobbing their advice over it, shrugging their shoulders and washing their hands of accountability, and I know that some of you here feel that about Australia as well. The public service, as a whole, must be able to garner the trust, confidence, and ultimately, the respect of successive administrations in order to do its job. The key for me, is to engage actively with the political context without becoming part of it.

It's very easy to do.

There is a line, and I say, we go down to the line but not over it. Often there are people and forces trying to pull us over the line. Every public servant in the room will know that this is not easy stuff. Political advisors can be one of those. You have political advisors in your system, we now have them in New Zealand. They were a response to the complexity of a fast-moving political context, powered up by social media and other media. Like many other jurisdictions, political advisors have just happened; they've just arrived on the scene. They've filled a market gap.

But, it's a role that, in my view, needs to be positioned in a constitutional sense, otherwise it is a risk to us. We need political advisors to understand and own the line. We need them to understand and own the role of the public service. In New Zealand, political advisors are public servants. They work for a Government department. Before the last election, I took the opportunity to issue, using my powers as Commissioner under the Act, a Code of Conduct for political advisors. A special Code of Conduct for political advisors.

This was not an easy thing to do, and that's a whole other story, and probably one I'd rather tell when cameras are not present. But, anyway, we did it before the last election and we issued the code. Following the election – because we had a change of Governments – I issued further guidance for political advisors, because I wanted to be crystal clear about where the line was, and I knew that we would have a whole set of new political advisors coming in to that role with the new Government. The Code of Conduct that I issued for Ministerial staff requires them to “respect the duty of our

independent State services to provide free and frank advice and to undertake their responsibilities free from inappropriate influence". It's there in the code.

In the New Zealand system, this has force of law through the employment relationship and, ultimately, I can order a public inquiry using my powers under the Act if necessary. I can do that. I could not do that without the Code. Some commentators in New Zealand – I'm sure this is the case here – say that the role of political advisor should not exist or should be curtailed in some way. With respect, I strongly disagree. That's to ignore the reality of modern politics. This is a real job, doing real work. It's important, and we cannot retreat into the past.

But, political advisors working in the right way, working with the administrators in the public service in the right way, are a guarantee of political neutrality, more than they are a threat to it.

Let me talk a little bit about free and frank advice. Again, I want to be clear about what we mean by this. Free and frank advice, in my book, is not about the bold and fearless public servant facing down the Minister, as characterised by some people. It is not a license to be obstructive to the Government's objectives or a Minister's policy position. The intended outcome of free and frank advice, is better results and better services for our country. Not officials advancing their own agenda or looking to demonstrate fearless independence for its own sake. The convention of giving free and frank advice is designed to support Ministers to achieve their objectives.

But, again, we need to make sure that this convention operates fit for purpose in our modern age. When I joined the public service, as you know now was a long time ago, there were no computers, no mobile phones, no emails and no text. None of that. There was one computer locked away on the third floor, and that's what they paid the benefits through. Otherwise, we had a typing pool as our means of communication. These days, the way I communicate most often with the Ministers I work with, is by text message in real time. It's fast, and sometimes it's furious. But, for some advice so significant it needs a little more formality than that around it, and it needs to be written down. It needs to be formal.

I think we need to be clear about what constitutes free and frank advice and why, and we need some rules around it. Free and frank advice, in my view, is a duty on public servants. It's a bottom line obligation. But, we do need some rules around it. Again, in New Zealand, we've spelt out some of this in the Cabinet Manual, and we've written it into the Codes of Conduct applying to political advisors and public servants in general. I have written it into the Performance Expectations of our Chief Executives, your secretaries. We've issued guidelines about it using my powers under the Act. These have formal force of law.

We're also developing a practice around free and frank advice, and this is being led and championed by the Head of the Policy Profession, appointed by me to do that. So, these things need to be taken care of and they need to be brought up to date in their operation in the modern age.

Open Government. There are a whole basket of things under this heading, and I've often got myself into trouble talking about this topic. The last time was in Singapore, where I found myself on the other side of the argument with the Head of the Australian Delegation there, as all of the Asian participants looked on at us arguing about this from

our bottom end of the planet. Open, easy, timely access to official information is an antidote to suspicion and mistrust. And most certainly the converse is true. It's basic, in my view, to political and public service accountability. I've heard people say that open access to information will constrain Government and effective decision making. I totally disagree.

There is a phase in policy development where things do need to stay confidential, where things are flying around and floating around and moving around where it's highly dynamic, otherwise you disturb the creativity of that process. But, beyond that, when things become more settled, when things become propositions, they need to go out. They need to go out. Not just requested, but, proactively. We need to put them out before we're asked to do that. I can't speak for the politicians, but, most public servants I know, don't fear being accountable but, they do fear being treated unfairly. They do fear the media and the others in this regard. That is why we're sometimes reticent about official information and its release.

But, you can't look at this without the backdrop of strong, ethical, active, leadership from system leaders. We absolutely need to back our people to do the right thing, and we need to back them to do this right thing. The thing that I've learned in this last job that I've got, is that politicians and others don't always agree with you in the heat of the moment. But, if you do the right thing, they will respect you for doing that. Not in the moment, but, in the round. They will respect you for doing the right thing. The right thing, in my book, is always to be upfront, open and accountable.

I say to the Chief Executives in New Zealand, that I don't expect perfection, but I do expect accountability. I say to them, that if they do that, if they stand up and are accountable, I will back them. That's not a license to do dumb things, and we could have a whole other conversation about that. That's a different story. But, I say, when we make a mistake I want us to "own it, fix it, and learn from it", and to do that publicly, if necessary. They tell me that that gives them the confidence to put stuff out and to front up.

Maybe New Zealand is a smaller, softer, more benign society, but, I find, in our country, that people are just sick to death of people like me, ducking and diving and spinning and running for cover. I find, that when you do front up and you tell the truth and you put it out there, and you're up front, out there and open, they don't want your head on a stick, they're just grateful for having somebody stand up and own something. They just want somebody to own something.

But, all of these things, we can't get away from it. None of them work without the guiding star of clear, moral purpose, or strong ethical and fair leadership. If we don't have that and proceed from that, all of these things become very difficult.

Let me talk a little bit about the public service and its future against that backdrop. So, if the public service exists to support good government, the bigger part of that is helping the Government meet the needs and aspirations of citizens. I want to start here, by returning to where I started out on the front desk of the dole office. In New Zealand, before the reforms of the early 1990s, we were a bureaucracy. The reforms freed us up. There's a TV program – it's very old now – called Gliding On. It was a comedy series. I see it more as a documentary. But, it portrays the public service that we had in New Zealand before the 1990s, and you all have a view of what that looked like.

The reforms of the 1990s, to me, were like the Vatican II of the public service. The windows were open, fresh air came in, we were liberated to get on and do some really good things. Now, back then, when I started out on the dole counter, in those days, it would take, on average, six weeks to process an application for the dole. Six whole weeks. You would come in, fill the forms out with someone like me, they would go in the back office, and it would take us six weeks to give you an answer. In the meantime, you would come in and you would beg for money, you would beg for emergency grants in order to feed your family and pay the bills.

Then, at the end of six weeks, we'd send you a letter and we would say congratulations you've been granted the unemployment benefit. There's arrears due, but you're not going to get most of them because we've offset the emergency grants. Now get out in the labour market and sell yourself to employers and prove to us that you're doing that. So, I joined for all the right reasons, but, we were actually doing a lot of damage. We were doing a lot of damage because we weren't doing a good job. The reforms of the 1990s enabled us to turn that around. I can remember, because I was Southern Regional Manager for the Department of Work and Income in New Zealand. I remember the day we got to same day service.

That is, you walk in and you walk out with an answer. You walk in and you walk out, and you get on with your life. Huge progress. That was enabled by the freeing up of the system that came from the reforms. But, as I've said, the reforms were before the age of information technology. These days, citizens expect to get all of their government services by one-stop shopping. They expect to go on their device, go into an app and get the whole lot. They don't see us as separate Government departments. They see Government as one thing, and they want what they need from Government, once in one go.

So, we need to step up again, and we need to reform again. Citizens also expect Government to deliver better outcomes. Not just better services, but better outcomes. They expect Government to deal with social and other problems and to make lives better. The first thing that you figure out, once you start focusing on outcomes, as every public servant in the room will know, is that unlike delivering services, most of what you need is not in your department, it's elsewhere. Most of what you need to deliver better outcomes is not in your department.

One of the biggest levers for better health outcomes is accommodation. It's not in the Ministry of Health. One of the biggest levers for delivering better education achievement outcomes is Health services. One of the biggest levers for reducing prison musters and doing better in the justice system is in education and in welfare. All the levers are elsewhere. So, the key to better outcomes becomes collaboration. We need to get joined up across our agencies, across the system, around individuals, families and communities. We need to start with them and organise around them.

So, how do we do that? The very first thing, in my book, is being clear about the outcome. I want to be really careful here. Not everything of value can be measured and not everything that can be measured is of value. I really believe that, otherwise I wouldn't have said everything that I've said so far. But, if the outcome is not clear and you can't articulate it and define it and measure it in some way, you're really going to struggle to achieve it. In New Zealand, one of the things that really unlocked things for us is this outcomes focus, and having the Government step up and take the risk of

setting clearly defined outcome targets or goals, around things like long-term welfare dependence, supporting vulnerable children, skills and employment, reducing crime.

The Government, actually, established targets that they published, and published progress on and put them out there, and made themselves, and us, accountable for them. That's really unlocked things. Of the 12 targets published, we achieved four, partially achieved another four, failed on two and are still working on two. The point is not that. The point is that we had the targets and they became a unified force and focus for the public service and for us to organise around. What we learned, and we learned most on those that we failed on, is that that's exactly what we have to do.

Now, the new Government is bringing its own approach to targets, they're higher level and more encompassing, and they're legislating them. But, they're still targets, and they still serve the same purpose. In this new world going forward, IT, digital and data are the keys. IT or digital is the engine of better services and data is the key of better outcomes. Again, in New Zealand, we are using digital to join up services for citizens around life events. So, we don't, actually, have to get physically get organised, IT can do that for us.

We've just launched a thing called Smart Start, which is basically an app or a website for people who are having a baby. Now, if you have a baby in New Zealand, there are about 12 different government services you've got to register for or navigate. It's actually a hell of a thing to do at a time in your life when you've got other concerns and priorities. Smart Start enables you to go and do all of that in one go, once, at one time. It enables you to register the baby, organise paid parental leave, birth certificates, passports, access to health providers and financial help, and a whole lot of other stuff.

There are 17 other life events where we're going to do the same thing, starting with end-of-life – we're doing that now - getting a job, starting school, becoming a senior citizen and access health services. IT is a big engine going forward, but, actually, we still need to physically change the way we're organised. IT can do that virtually, but physically we need to do that in reality. In New Zealand, we've had sector groups at agency level for some time, and we've combined that with the outcome targets to get some traction. Now, we're starting to physically join up around outcomes. We're organising around things like child poverty reduction and climate change. The new Prime Minister's new Cabinet Committees, and those, will align.

So, we've got alignment across the public service political barrier. Those of you, who are public servants will know how important that is. We can all get organised to do better, but, if the thing fractionates into dozens of little parts, once it crosses the political divide, we're wasting our time. So, we're achieving that alignment. At the front of the system, we've experimented with a whole bunch of models from loose co-operation to formally mandated teams. One of the tools, I think, we're missing though, is the ability to set up joint venture companies, joint venture agencies, joint venture organisations. In the private sector, if you had a number of private sector companies wanting to exploit a market, that's what they'd do. They'd set up a joint venture. I believe we need to be able to do that in New Zealand as well.

Some of what we do will be virtual through IT. Some of it will be hard-wired in the ways that I'm saying. But, the key is to start with the individual, their family and their community, and work back from that and organise around them. Some of you will know

this is not easy. Some of you will know that there are big informational privacy issues to be traversed here, and I don't intend to go into those, partly because it's too hard, but, also, because we don't have the time. But, let me just talk a little bit about privacy and give you my own view.

We are, in my view, wasting our time trying to adapt current arrangements to do with privacy to this new world. The paradigm is wrong. In New Zealand, our privacy arrangements were born out of data matching for compliance and administrative efficiency, and I know that, because I did it many years ago. What we need, is a different regime for information sharing and data pooling to deliver better services. It's a different thing, for a different purpose. Trying to adapt one for the others will not work, in my view, and that's what we're experiencing in New Zealand.

In my experience, as well, citizens think differently about this as well. In many years of working in this area, I've never once encountered resistance from clients when the purpose has been to help them, not to trap them or to catch them out. To help them. Not once. All of this begs some big questions for the future role of the public service, especially on transactional services delivery. One future sees the public service as providing the platforms off of which third party providers can provide services, a bit like Amazon does.

When it comes to the outcomes focus, especially if we're dealing with vulnerable marginalised individuals and families, public servants might not be the right people to get through the front door. We might not get through the front door at all. So, partnering with third parties or allowing them to take responsibility for delivering the whole service might be as effective. However, very clearly, there are some areas, particularly those using the coercive powers of the State, where Government needs to be the provider and needs to be directly accountable. I just want to be clear about that.

But, into the future, more and more, we will see approaches to the delivery of public services, which clearly and squarely put the individual client or their family at the centre of everything. Technology and alternative forms of organisation will play a big role, and the boundaries, as I've said, to what we do, and others do, will shift. But, all of this will enable us to make a bigger difference. All of this, I think, is very exciting. All of this, I think, is totally aligned with the spirit of service and the imperative of moral purpose, I talked about earlier.

In our two countries, and around the world, public servants, politicians, academics and others are grappling with these issues. In an era characterised by disengagement from government, how do we build trust and confidence in our public institutions and their important role? How do we ensure that they are fit for purpose in the 21st century? How do we meet the ever increasing expectations of citizens? These are some of the things that we're thinking about in New Zealand and some of the solutions that we're working on in New Zealand.

To finish where I started. Underpinning everything, all of this, and propelling it forward is that spirit of service. Our first, and last, responsibility as public service leaders is to support, protect, and nurture that spirit in the people who give expression to it every day, every week. They deserve that from us, and they also deserve a public service system that enables the spirit of service to be translated into the better services and better outcomes that they are so very, very, motivated to deliver.

Nā reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Kia ora koutou katoa.

Cheers. Thank you everyone.