



Office of Hon Bill English

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Finance
Minister Responsible for HNZC

Gavin Walker
Chair
Guardians of New Zealand Superannuation
P O Box 106607
AUCKLAND 1143

Dear Gavin

Annual Letter of Expectation

I am writing to convey my expectations of the Guardians of New Zealand Superannuation (Guardians) as it begins working on its 2015/16 Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) and, if applicable, its Statement of Intent (SOI).

Priority Expectations

- *Returns:* A prime focus for Ministers is that Crown Financial Institutions (CFIs) achieve their long term performance objectives. The Crown has a long term perspective on returns, and acknowledges that returns will vary from year to year, sometimes due to temporary or non-controllable factors. Emphasis will continue to be placed on longer term returns. In circumstances where the longer term return is persistently below the performance objective, I expect the CFI to review the appropriateness of its investment strategy. Furthermore, where active management or other value adding strategies are employed, achieving returns in excess of benchmarks after investment management fees and other operational costs is expected.
- *Crown Risk Management:* The management of financial risks at an aggregate level is of growing importance for the Crown, especially given the size and growth of financial assets on the Crown balance sheet. The Government needs to better understand of the nature of these risks in the context of impacts on the Crown balance sheet. The Government needs to ensure that appropriate risk settings are in place across the Crown balance sheet. I have tasked the Treasury to work in this space and I ask that you engage with the Treasury when required to support this work.
- *Investment Management Expenses:* Notwithstanding the expectation for CFIs to outperform investment objectives after investment management costs, each CFI should also ensure that the costs incurred in implementing its investment strategy are appropriate in the context of managing Crown assets.

- *Investment Review:* We expect CFI boards to review major past investment decisions to assure themselves that the benefits claimed when such decisions were made are in fact being realised. Our expectation is that such reviews are made available to Ministers. The CFIs are increasing investment in non-listed investments and we think scrutiny by the owner for the larger investments is warranted.
- *Joint Ventures:* While Ministers are supportive of CFIs entering into joint venture (j.v.) arrangements as a way of leveraging expertise and capital, the expectation is that Ministers are informed at an early stage of any j.v. formation, particularly where the j.v. involves another New Zealand government entity or where it includes a foreign government or sovereign wealth fund.
- *Use of derivatives:* The aggregate funds managed within the CFI portfolio continues to grow as a percentage of the overall Crown's balance sheet. There continues to be an increasing use of derivative instruments within the portfolios. Consistent with last year's expectations it is my expectation that CFIs should use derivatives judiciously and that, where relevant, there is a strong case for their use relative to physical exposures.
- *Collaboration:* While the individual objectives and investment strategies differ across the CFI portfolio there is a material level of crossover in the operational investment activities of the CFIs. My expectation is that the CFIs will continue to identify opportunities and implement strategies to achieve operational synergies and cost efficiencies through sharing of resources and intellectual capital.

Expectations Specific to the Guardians

- I am aware that the progress of the New Zealand Superannuation and Retirement Income Amendment Bill, which will allow the Guardians to control special purpose entities that help facilitate investments, has been protracted. However this is not unusual in the process of legislative change. I expect that the Bill will be passed during 2015.
- The independent review conducted by Promontory in 2014 contained a number of recommendations which you have provided comments on, including how you plan to move forward on them. I expect that you will make significant progress on those recommendations, and will provide me with updates in your quarterly reports.
- In August I sent a letter to you which outlined Cabinet's expectations relating to Crown Treaty obligations in respect of disposal of land holdings. I expect you to develop those expectations into your accountability documents.
- I understand that the Guardians are looking at the lessons from the Oak Finance investment, including whether there are any implications for the Guardians' future investment decision-making processes. I would appreciate being informed of the results from this piece of work.

General Expectations

Expectations in previous years' expectations letters continue to apply in 2015/16 and the forecast period. Particular regard should be given to the following:

- *Draft Statement of Intent (SOI) (where applicable) and Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE):* All CFIs are expected to provide Ministers with a SPE by **1 May 2015**, at the latest. If you are preparing an SOI, this is also due by 1 May. SOIs are strategic documents that must cover at least four years. They can remain in place for up to three years but the responsible Minister can ask for a new SOI at any time. The SPE is an annual document that sets out the annual performance expectations and provides a base for assessing performance.
- *OIA requests:* The Office of the Minister of Finance is to be advised by the entity when it receives a request under the Official Information Act and of the proposed response.
- *"No surprises" policy:* I expect you to maintain the "no surprises" policy and to inform me well in advance of any material or significant events, transactions and other issues that could be considered contentious or attract wide public interest, whether positive or negative.

Engagement

My expectation is that you and your executive will continue to engage openly with the Treasury during the year. With respect to this letter, if you have any questions or require further clarification on any of my expectations, please contact Kirsty Flannagan at the Treasury in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Hon Bill English
Minister of Finance

Cc:
Adrian Orr
CEO
Guardians of New Zealand Superannuation
PO Box 1036
Auckland 1143