



Independent Oversight Committee

Independent Oversight Committee information release

November 2023

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<https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/company-and-entity-performance-advice/portfolio-companies-and-entities/independent-oversight-committee>

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Communications Policy

Background

Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) members have received unsolicited email and verbal communications from members of the public or their representatives in relation to matters concerning the Southern Response Earthquake Services Limited (SRES) pre-October 2014 Proactive Package.

To ensure consistency in responses, and after the required consultation with the SRES Board and the Crown, the IOC **agrees** as follows:

1. Email communications from policyholders or their representatives:

- a. IOC members will forward any communications to the Chair for response in accordance with the IOC Terms of Reference.
- b. The Chair will respond along the following lines:

Dear

Thank you for your email. The role of the Independent Oversight Committee is to provide independent oversight of Southern Response's decision-making in respect of the implementation and delivery of the Crown Package that was announced by the Minister for the Earthquake Commission, Minister Clark, last December. To the extent that we are able, in light of our role, we will consider/have been considering the matter/s you have raised. However, matters specific to your claim are best addressed to Southern Response.

Among the tasks of the Committee is to report to the Crown, the Southern Response Board and publicly to affected policyholders. Our Terms of Reference state that *it is not intended that the Committee will communicate directly and privately with individual policyholders*, so you may not receive a further direct reply from us.

Nevertheless, the Committee, wishing to be open to sources of information other than Southern Response, is grateful when policyholders draw important matters to its attention.

You might find it useful to read our Terms of Reference, which can be found at <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-06/oia-20200430.pdf> (at page 190).

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely

- c. Any subsequent correspondence should be responded to by reference to the initial response (above) and longer email conversations should be avoided.
- d. Further or more detailed correspondence, if required for any reason, will not be entered into unless first discussed with IOC members.

2. Informal contacts by phone or in person:

- a. Committee members may confirm their appointment to the IOC as allowed by the Terms of Reference.
- b. Members should thank the person for drawing matters to IOC attention. Explain that the Committee can receive queries and information by means of email to comments@ioc.co.nz and will discuss any such communications at its monthly meetings. If appropriate, the IOC will address the issues in its reports and recommendations to SRES, the Crown and to the public, in accordance with its Terms of Reference.
- c. Committee members can also refer to the Terms of Reference, including that the role of the Committee is not to consider individual policyholder complaints or provide a dispute resolution body and that it is not intended that the Committee will communicate directly and privately with individual policyholders.
- d. Members may draw attention to various websites (for example, SRES or The Treasury) where publicly available information (including the IOC Terms of Reference) is held.
- e. Members should otherwise refrain from making any comment about IOC work.

3. Reporting publicly

- a. The IOC has a web page on the Treasury web site. The IOC minutes and Reports to the Crown and Policyholders are published as they become available. The Terms of Reference and other documents, including this communications policy are also publicly available on the web page.

Last updated 13 October 2023