



## **Hon Andrew Little MP**

Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-Entry

1 November 2017

Carolyn Tremain  
Chief Executive  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

CC: Rt Hon Winston Peters MP, Deputy Prime Minister  
CC: Hon Eugenie Sage MP, Minister of Conservation  
CC: Bruce Parkes, Pike River Establishment Unit Lead  
CC: Jo Hughes, Head of Office of the Chief Executive

### **IN CONFIDENCE**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Government has committed to re-entry to Pike River,
- 1.2. The Government recognises the distinction between the drift and the mine workings,
- 1.3. The objectives are to:
  - 1.3.1. Gather evidence to ascertain what occurred at Pike River Coal Mine ("Pike River") on 19 November 2010, in order to prevent future mining tragedies,
  - 1.3.2. To give victims' loved ones ("the families") overdue closure and peace of mind, and if possible recover remains.

1.4. The following are the requirements:

- 1.4.1. A reset of Government's relationship with the families, with future interactions guided by an agreed Code of Conduct for officials' interactions that recognises the families interactions with the previous government have frequently not lived up to their expectations,
- 1.4.2. Policy based on the widest possible range of the highest quality evidence,
- 1.4.3. Demonstrable commitment to transparency and partnership with the families,
- 1.4.4. Carefully targeted and appropriate use of Government resources to deliver the objectives.

## 2. Interactions with the families

- 2.1.1. I understand that a democratic process has mandated the following Families Reference Group (FRG):
  - 2.1.1.1. Ms Anna Osborne of Greymouth. Ms Osborne is the liaison to the FRG,
  - 2.1.1.2. Mr Bernie Monk of Greymouth,
  - 2.1.1.3. Ms Sonya Rockhouse of Christchurch.
- 2.1.2. I am not aware of the practice used up to now when engaging with the FRG, but my expectation is they will be contributing to the decision-making by being involved in discussions and meetings with officials and the Experts Group,
- 2.1.3. I understand there is a strong desire by both the FRG and the Experts Group that the FRG 'sit between' interactions between officials and the Experts Group,
- 2.1.4. I am desirous that a Code of Conduct for officials' interactions with the families be negotiated. I propose that the following principles should be a starting basis for negotiations:
  - 2.1.4.1. The Government recognises the tremendous loss and pain felt by the families caused by the deaths of

their loved ones in 2010, and is committed to working with the families in a spirit of partnership and respect,

2.1.4.2. The Government is committed to transparency, having due regard for the dignity and privacy of persons living and deceased,

2.1.4.3. Officials must only initiate interactions with the families on any new matter via the FRG's nominated contact person, usually the liaison to,

2.1.4.4. The Pike River Re-entry Minister has a necessary independent actor role. Therefore a reserve authority to reach out through my office if and as necessary is desirable,

2.1.4.5. Other principles that might be requested by the families.

### **3. Support to me as Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry**

3.1. I am requesting that MBIE support me as Minister:

3.1.1. Confirming secondment of a departmental Private Secretary for Pike River Re-entry into my Ministerial office,

3.1.2. Having appropriate officials accompany me to meetings with the families, the FRG, Experts Group, families who have not mandated the FRG, and other meetings as appropriate,

3.1.3. Provide my office with electronic copies of:

3.1.3.1. All technical and policy briefings and reports created by officials since 19 November 2010 (named using YYMMDD format and clearly specifying the authoring agency and the author),

3.1.3.2. All technical and policy reports provided to Government by the Experts Group via the families since 19 November 2010, including future briefings (named using YYMMDD format and clearly specifying the author where possible), where this is agreed to by the Experts Group,

- 3.1.4. Implement mechanisms to ensure the FRG, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Conservation, the Member of Parliament for West Coast-Tasman, and Cabinet Committees and I as necessary are appropriately apprised of progress,
- 3.1.5. Coordinate with other agencies to notify my office about all Pike River-related media enquiries, and where reasonable refer these requests to my office in the first instance,
- 3.1.6. Provide my office with an electronic daily news summary of all Pike River-related stories, including transcriptions of audio and video,
- 3.1.7. Solicit feedback on draft plans from recognised experts in the global mining fraternity, and to report to me on that feedback and to publish those reports online,
- 3.1.8. Support members of the FRG and Experts Group with their reasonable costs of engaging with the Government, including any required travel,
- 3.1.9. Operate a “no surprises” policy with the Government and the FRG.

#### **4. Unmanned re-entry**

- 4.1. I am not satisfied from the information provided to me that the previous government’s unmanned re-entry plan is suitably advanced so as to meet the objectives,
- 4.2. Before considering whether to continue or suspend this plan, I am requesting officials to advise on the precise nature of the technology being developed for unmanned re-entry, the status of provenness of that development, and the Government’s interests in any intellectual property created as a result of the investment in the project to date.

#### **5. Solid Energy Ltd wind-down**

- 5.1. I am urgently requesting officials to cost a plan to prevent obstruction of fulfilling the objectives, because of the imminent wind-down of Solid Energy Ltd,

- 5.2. That advice should consider all relevant issues, including:
- 5.2.1. Ownership of the mine and mining equipment,
  - 5.2.2. Any licences, permits and access agreements required to facilitate re-entry to the drift,
  - 5.2.3. Upholding commitments already made to provide a suitable memorial within the Paparoa National Park,
  - 5.2.4. The nature of the agency needed to oversee re-entry.

Regards



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Proactively released