

DOC-7428473

22 August 2023

██████████  
Via email ██████████

Dear ██████████,

### **Cape Sanctuary**

You have recently received Mr Shanks's final report: the Independent Review Into Complaints about Kiwi Deaths, July 2023.

No doubt you have read the report closely, as have I. It is illuminating, detailed and critical of this Department and its handling of your complaints. Plainly, we have work to do to respond to Mr Shanks's recommendations. Embedding change will take time but I assure you I am committed to the cause.

The main purpose of this letter though is to apologise to you for the distress and frustration you have suffered.

This Department should have promptly investigated your complaint when you raised your concerns in September 2017. It did not. That failure was compounded when you made a subsequent complaint to the Minister of Conservation. Our advice to the Minister contained errors, including significantly understating the number of kiwi chicks that had died over the 2016/2017 season. As a result, the Minister's response to your complaint repeated those errors. This was deeply regrettable and undoubtedly caused you additional concern and irritation.

While handling your complaints the Department also repeatedly failed to protect your privacy and failed to treat you as a protected discloser. In addition, the Department made a public statement that indicated your concerns were unfounded and based on opinion not evidence.

Despite the delays, false starts, and mishandling of your concerns, you have engaged constructively and openly in the Shanks Review and I thank you for that. Prolonging your involvement in this matter will have taken a toll on you.

I am very sorry for what you have experienced over the last six years. I hope that the publication of the Shanks Review brings you a measure of satisfaction knowing that the substance of your original complaint has, at last, been comprehensively and independently investigated. I regret however that it took so long.



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

I know you will be watching us closely to see that we make genuine progress under my leadership. I welcome your scrutiny and I thank you for your dogged persistence and your commitment to kiwi conservation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'p.nelson'.

Penny Nelson  
Director-General/Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

Cc: [REDACTED]  
Via email [REDACTED]

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