



Te Kawa Mataaho

Public Service Commission

9 October 2020

Jordan Williams
Executive Director
New Zealand Taxpayers' Union | Auckland Ratepayers' Alliance

By email: Jordan@taxpayers.org.nz

Dear Mr Williams

Thank you for your email of 5 October 2020 concerning a video created by Oranga Tamariki which was subsequently posted on the Minister for Children, the Hon Tracey Martin's Facebook page. I have considered whether the production and content of the video accords with the principle of political neutrality.

In relation to that principle, I expect public servants to take care in their words and in their actions to ensure that there is no possibility of them being seen to be politically biased.

I am advised the video in question was produced to acknowledge and thank the Minister for her work with the agency over the last three years. I have no issue with public servants thanking their Ministers. That is good manners.

However, in this situation, in my view the content of the video could be interpreted as political endorsement of the Minister and government policies and that is not appropriate.

I have discussed this matter with the Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki, Mrs Gráinne Moss. She is clear about the need to uphold neutrality in her agency and regrets that the video created the potential for that to be called into question on this occasion. The video has also been taken down.

I therefore consider that no further action is necessary on my part.

Thank you for raising your concerns with me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Peter Hughes', written in a cursive style.

Peter Hughes (he/him)

Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Kawa Mataaho

Public Service Commissioner | Head of Service