

3 November 2016

Hon Paula Bennett
Minister of State Services

Appointment: Chief Executive and Secretary for Education, Ministry of Education

Proposal

- 1 I recommend that Ms Iona May Holsted be appointed to the position of Chief Executive and Secretary for Education, Ministry of Education (MoE) for a term of five years from 5 December 2016 to 4 December 2021.
- 2 Ms Holsted is a highly experienced public servant with a deep understanding of the issues in the education system and considerable experience in leading change across organisational boundaries. Ms Holsted started her career as a primary school teacher and is currently the Chief Executive (CE) of the Education Review Office, a role she has held since July 2014. Prior to this role Ms Holsted was Deputy Chief Executive – Students, Seniors and Integrity Services at the Ministry of Social Development.
- 3 I consider that Ms Holsted has the necessary skills and experience to successfully lead MoE. A copy of her summarised curriculum vitae is attached.
- 4 I propose that you forward my recommendation to Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee (APH) for referral to the Governor-General in Council. A warrant for execution by the Governor-General is attached.

Background

- 5 The position of Chief Executive and Secretary for Education became vacant on 4 July 2016 when I resigned as Secretary for Education, MoE. Ms Katrina Casey was appointed as the Acting Chief Executive until 23 December 2016 or until a substantive appointment was made.
- 6 The Chief Executive and Secretary for Education is responsible for:
 - 6.1 providing active stewardship and leadership across the education system to drive improved performance to lift student achievement at all levels;
 - 6.2 delivering high-quality policy advice to Government on the education system covering childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education;
 - 6.3 working collectively with other chief executives in education agencies to implement changes to the education system and link these changes with improvements more broadly in the economic and social sectors; and
 - 6.4 leading a large and complex Ministry accountable for delivering the end to end process from policy to operational delivery.

Requirements of the Position

- 7 On 20 June 2016, Cabinet confirmed the attached position description as a basis for selecting a suitable candidate for appointment [CAB -16-MIN-0218 refers].
- 8 The critical areas of success for the Chief Executive and Secretary for the Education, MoE are:
 - 8.1 maintain critical relationships and implement a reform agenda that continues to lift the Ministry's performance, its business processes and delivery models;

IN CONFIDENCE

- 8.2 deliver on the significant investment in the education infrastructure programme, including the Greater Christchurch Education Renewal and meeting growth in Auckland;
- 8.3 deliver Better Public Services targets, such that:
- 8.3.1 in 2016 98% of new entrants have participated in quality early childhood education;
 - 8.3.2 in 2017 85% of 18 year olds have NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent qualification; and
 - 8.3.3 in 2017 55% of 25-34 year olds have a qualification at NZQF Level 4 or above.
- 8.4 develop National Standards reporting and moderation and deliver targets, such that:
- 8.4.1 in 2017 85% of all Year 1-10 learners meet literacy and numeracy expectations.
- 8.5 deliver the on-going development of Māori Medium education and Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua;
- 8.6 further develop the regional approach to serving and supporting Communities of Learning, schools and kura;
- 8.7 develop a 21st-century learning system through flexible, innovative learning environments and building on the roll-out of ultra-fast broadband and school network upgrades;
- 8.8 move the focus to a data informed understanding of the size of the educational challenge at individual learner level;
- 8.9 be collaborative in the social investment approach that targets interventions to deliver individual educational success.
- 9 In addition, as with all Public Service chief executives, Ms Holsted will be required to provide leadership to uplift the productivity of the Public Service.
- 10 The Chief Executive and Secretary for the Education, MoE must be able to obtain and maintain a Secret security clearance.

Selection Process

- 11 The vacancy was advertised from 9 July 2016 in the Dominion Post and the New Zealand Herald, and electronically on the New Zealand Government Jobs Online and State Services Commission websites from 1 July. Applications closed on 1 August 2016.
- 12 Search and assessment consultants were engaged to assist with a significant search process. On this occasion two different recruitment agencies were concurrently involved in the search. A short list of ^{9(2)(a) p17} as identified from a large list of potential candidates, ^{9(2)(a) privacy} formally lodged an application.
- 13 The short-listed candidates were interviewed on 31 October 2016 by a panel I convened, comprising of:
- Debbie Power (Deputy State Services Commissioner);
 - Mr Murray Jack;
 - Dame Karen Sewell, DNZM, QSO
 - Mr Pem Bird; and
 - Brother Sir Patrick Lynch KNZM, QSO.

Recommended Appointee

- 14 I recommend the appointment of Ms Holsted to the position of CE and Secretary for Education, MoE for a five year term from 5 December 2016 to 4 December 2021.
- 15 Ms Holsted started her career as a primary school teacher and is currently the CE and Chief Review Officer of the Education Review Office (ERO). Prior to this she was Deputy Chief Executive at the Ministry of Social Development where she led complex policy advice, strategic reviews, and service delivery. Ms Holsted has also held various senior roles in the State Services Commission over a period of 12 years, including serving as Deputy Commissioner. Ms Holsted was responsible for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment transition and consolidation. Ms Holsted has held management responsibility for 1500 staff and an \$83 million budget.
- 16 Ms Holsted is a respected leader in New Zealand public sector, is well regarded in the education sector and has demonstrable experience leading strategy and implementation in complex environments. She has the necessary leadership skills to provide stewardship across the education system and would bring to the role a combination of an excellent understanding of the operating environment and considerable skill in building and maintaining high quality relationships across the system. Ms Holsted is strongly committed to lifting the performance of the education system and has an ambitious focus on raising the achievement of children and young people.
- 17 Ms Holsted has proven her ability to partner and collaborate with chief executives, sector groups and education leaders, and other senior government and industry leaders. She has a strong policy background matched with considerable experience in implementation and delivery. Over the years Ms Holsted has worked closely with a number of Ministers, and has a track record of meeting expectations. Her referees reflected on her ability to maintain open and clear communication channels with Ministers and chief executives, and provide them with sound advice and high quality information. She is considered to be a leader of high integrity.
- 18 Ms Holsted is already providing leadership in the New Zealand education sector in her current role. She is an accomplished presenter, who has the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences and is authentic and genuine in her style. She understands what the priorities and issues are in education and how to manage change in a devolved environment.
- 19 In her role as the CE of ERO Ms Holsted was responsible for leading the organisation that contributed to the Government's priorities to review and report on the quality of the education provided to students by early childhood and schooling education services, the sustainability of that quality over time, and the evidence of measurable gain in learning for individual learnings year on year. Ms Holsted brings a strong understanding of the synergies and challenges of the education system, policies and practices.
- 20 Her referees strongly support her appointment with all commenting on her deep public service ethic, her servant leadership approach, and her strong people management and influencing skills. Those that have worked with Ms Holsted remark on her demonstrable capability to build and lead teams to execute change, as well as set clear objectives and expectations to achieve results.
- 21 In summary, I am of the view that Ms Holsted meets the requirements of Section 35 (12) of the State Sector Act 1988 and those of the attached position description.

Conditions of Employment

- 22 I propose to negotiate an employment agreement with Ms Holsted consistent with the Public Service Chief Executive Employment agreement. In accordance with Section 38 of the State Sector Act 1988, I will consult the Prime Minister before finalising the terms and conditions of employment for Ms Holsted, including a proposed five year term. I have also consulted with Minister Parata, Minister of Education about the proposed appointment.
- 23 Ms Holsted's employment is subject to her obtaining and maintaining a Secret security clearance.

Publicity

- 24 There will be a media release relating to the appointment of Ms Holsted, at a time to be confirmed shortly after Cabinet's confirmation of the appointment and that, in conjunction with this, the State Services Commission intends to release certain documents relating to the appointment in consultation with your office and Ms Holsted. We intend to proactively release, with redactions as required in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982:
- the APH paper;
 - the warrant for appointment;
 - Ms Holsted's summarised CV; and
 - cover memorandums.

Recommendations

- 25 I recommend that you:
- 1 **forward** my recommendation to appoint Ms Iona Holsted as the Chief Executive and Secretary for Education, Ministry of Education, to Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee for referral to the Governor-General in Council;
 - 2 **note** that I will consult with the Prime Minister and you, as Minister of State Services, before finalising terms and conditions of employment with Ms Holsted;
 - 3 **note** that a warrant for appointment is attached for execution by the Governor-General in due course;
 - 4 **note** that Ms Holsted's employment is subject to her obtaining and maintaining a Secret security clearance; and
 - 5 **note** that I, in consultation with you and Ms Holsted, intend to, in accordance with the State Services Commission's (SSC) commitment to open government, release documents relating to the appointment on SSC's website in conjunction with the media release.

Peter Hughes
State Services Commissioner