

2: *Report of Acting Chief Executive*

E mihi ana ki te Tangata e tangi ana ki te Whenua. Ratou kua wheturangitia, haere, haere, haere. Tatou te hunga ora tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.

The Crown Forestry Rental Trust has been the subject of criticism for a number of years. Both Maori and the Crown have been dissatisfied with the pace of the Treaty Settlement process and as a result a focal point for the dissatisfaction was required. Because of the Trust's unique status – a Trust governed by an equal number of Crown and Maori Trustees and responsible for funding a considerable part of the settlement process – CFRT was an easy choice for that role.

This criticism was undeserved but it did offer the Trust an opportunity to re-evaluate its performance.

Last year in August we initiated an internal review into the way we conduct our business. We involved staff, claimants, Treaty sector agencies and a range of other stakeholders. The dominant theme that emerged was that when CFRT “stuck to its knitting” it did this well. Over the past few years we appear to have become involved in a range of activities and roles that are not our core business. We also became involved at times in trying to do the job for the claimants rather than assisting them to do it themselves. This was all driven by a desire to secure a faster settlement process.

For the first six months of the year, we undertook a realignment programme to put the organisation back in its proper role – as a facilitator in the settlement process rather than an active player. CFRT cannot settle claims; only Maori and the Crown can do that. Our core purpose is to assist Maori to prepare, present and negotiate their claims. The best way we can do this is through providing the following services:

- Funding;
- Research planning, contracting and quality control;
- Relationship brokering and;
- Knowledge of the Treaty settlement process.

In order to clarify to all stakeholders what they can expect from CFRT, we prepared a “road map for the settlement process”, which identifies the major milestones and the activities required to achieve those milestones. For those activities that fit within the scope of CFRT, we have developed

a benchmarked pricing model based on the experience of other groups who have completed the process. A manual clearly describing CFRT Policies and Processes has been signed off by the Trustees and information sheets are available to claimants.

With the realignment process, there has been a corresponding down-sizing of the organisation. Primarily, this was achieved through allowing the expiry of fixed term contracts, although a limited number of roles were disestablished. Staff commitment to the settlement process has always been high and it is with genuine regret that we saw these valued people depart the organisation.

I take this opportunity to thank Trust staff – all performed outstandingly this year. The commitment to business while dealing with the change management programme is a credit to their professionalism.

The settlement process is based around the notion of comprehensive settlements. The Crown seeks to settle comprehensively with large natural groups. The Waitangi Tribunal process hears claims on a district wide basis. The CFRT Trust Deed specifies that we work to progress those claims that involve or could involve Crown licensed lands. As no provision currently exists for the negotiation of forestry specific claims, CFRT is forced to accept a considerable part of the burden for paying for the settlement of all claims. This is evident in our business plan for the next five years.

CFRT seeks to offer clearly defined services to the Treaty sector. Our role is to invest in a range of activities that assist claimants to achieve specific settlement outcomes. Claimants rightfully have ownership, control and ultimate responsibility for the successful progression of their claims. We seek to conduct our business in a professional manner. The process of defining and refining who we are and what we do is a natural part of the evolution of any organisation at this point.

I am confident that CFRT is in a strong position to perform its role in facilitating the resolution of Treaty of Waitangi claims over the next few years.

Heoi ano te korero mo tenei wa.

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Ben Dalton
Acting Chief Executive
Ngā Kaitiaki Rēti Ngahere Karauna
Crown Forestry Rental Trust