

19 March 2020

Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation  
Parliament  
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

**Re: Strategic Issues Letter**

In response to your Letter of Expectations I wish to thank you for your continued support of Scion and our strategy and for your complimentary remarks about our delivery, governance and operation.

In addition to our regular engagement with MBIE, Scion continues to develop its strategic relationship with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and Te Uru Rākau and keeps the Minister of Forestry, Shane Jones, well informed about our positive work for the forestry sector and regional economic (and social and environmental) outcomes. We are also very engaged with the Ministry for the Environment on our waste minimisation and circular bioeconomy initiatives.

I assure you that Scion will continue to fully consider and contribute to government-wide initiatives and science strategies within our sector in collaboration with appropriate organisations, iwi, agencies and departments. We are very conscious of the fluid situation the country is in with the developing Covid-19 pandemic and are ensuring that our expertise is available to help the Government's response efforts.

Staying strategically aligned with government goals remains key to our purpose, but we face a challenge around infrastructure needed to support our strategy. If we are to help deliver on the huge benefits for New Zealand promised through the One Billion Tree mission and to build the new industries that the circular bioeconomy offers for our country, we will need government support for infrastructure, such as a bio pilot facility. This will help validate commercial investment by taking lab-scale concepts to pilot-scale demonstration. An example of this approach in New Zealand is the Food Innovation Network, and this pilot facility approach is one adopted by many other countries.

In response to your specific 2020/2021 priorities for Scion, I am pleased to advise as follows:

- **Science review:** We much appreciate the collaborative work with MBIE on long-term funding solutions with the next step being the science review. This review will focus on ensuring our science priorities and capabilities are well aligned with our strategy and that we are in good shape to deliver on the Government's objectives. I thank you for your support and recognition of the importance of this for New Zealand.
- **Māori engagement:** Our Māori relationships and the development of Māori Forestry Roadmaps are a key step in unleashing the potential of Māori, forestry and all that we can make from trees. Our work is critical to enabling significant Māori entities and mana whenua deliver future impact for New Zealand through the circular bioeconomy.
- **Board evaluation:** I am committed to ongoing director and board improvement. Several initiatives have been put in place to achieve this.
- **Connectedness:** As the smallest CRI, connectedness has been a key approach for us. We will remain committed to collaboration rather than duplication and ensuring we are providing our expert evidence-based input into sector strategies and transformation plans.

Scion is committed to good governance, and we will continue to keep you fully informed so that we are better able to prioritise and enable responses to risks and opportunities for New Zealand. We believe

that these discussions, and those with the CRI Collective Review, are essential for ensuring we work on those things that will make the greatest difference for New Zealand's future.

We have noted the advice provided in the State Services Commission's updated Letter of Enduring Expectations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Anderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "Yours sincerely".

Dr Helen Anderson  
Scion Chair

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29 May 2020

Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation  
Parliament  
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

**Re: Strategic Issues Letter – Covid-19 Addendum**

We remain confident that the matters we raised in our Strategic Issues Letter of 19 March 2020 are still important and appropriate. As a result of the impacts of Covid-19 on New Zealand and the world we reiterate the following paragraph:

*Staying strategically aligned with government goals remains key to our purpose, but we face a challenge around infrastructure needed to support our strategy. If we are to deliver on the huge benefits for New Zealand promised through the One Billion Trees mission and to build new industries that the circular bioeconomy offers for our country, we will need government support for infrastructure, such as a biopilot facility. This will help validate commercial investment by taking lab-scale concepts to pilot-scale demonstration. An example of this approach in New Zealand is the Food Innovation Network, and this pilot facility approach is one adopted by many other countries.*

Our strategic plan is about New Zealand's future opportunity in a Circular Bioeconomy world. This is about creating a new primary industry that is biobased rather than fossil-fuel based and is aligned with the global climate change drivers. Now is the time to accelerate our strategy. The key component to this is our biopilot proposal that is with Ministers after having successfully passed through the Crown Infrastructure Partners process. This project not only provides construction jobs, it provides ongoing operational jobs and will develop new industries with new employment pathways for New Zealand. The project will allow the adoption and adaption of science and technology to create new products and industries for New Zealand alongside a range of partners on the Scion campus.

Very importantly, this project will support Rotorua in "building back better" through jobs and diversification.

Our involvement with mana whenua and other iwi groups indicates good progress and strong interest in science and Vision Mātauranga, together bringing outcomes for Māori that will support New Zealand's recovery.

We want to reiterate that the opportunity to create new high-value products, biomaterials, pharmaceuticals and other chemicals from trees is real, and supports the transformation of the forestry sector and the development of new industrial landscapes, including regional manufacturing.

**It is time to accelerate this work and we hope to have your continued support for our strategy as well as for this critical enabling project.**

Yours sincerely

Dr Helen Anderson  
Scion Chair