

Dear xxxx,

Update on the work of the McGuinness Institute

I am writing to share an update on some of the Institute's most recent work of particular , and some of our up-and-coming focuses for the remainder of the year.

Discussion Paper 2023/01 – BIG Ideas: Brief to the Incoming Government (B.I.G.) (attached)

The term 'polycrisis' is now in popular use. The World Economic Forum's *Global Risks Report 2023* described a polycrisis as 'a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part'. As we wrote this discussion paper, our country was facing another crisis. The Auckland floods, followed shortly afterwards by Cyclone Gabrielle, led to New Zealand's third ever national state of emergency under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. Our only way forward is to do something significant. We suggest doing something in the form of a 'polysolution' – a package of BIG policy actions that have scale and together are able to 'shock' the emerging polycrisis with a diverse range of skills, tools and actions designed to slow, control and ideally reverse the mass of crises we face. In this context, 'BIG' is a play on both the phrase Brief to the Incoming Government (B.I.G.) and the term 'BIG' (i.e. scale). The short read is attached, but please find the long read on our website for a more in-depth version.

Discussion Paper 2022/03 – Nuclear War: Are we prepared?

This discussion paper gives important insights into the challenges that a nuclear war in the northern hemisphere might bring. Written by Wren Green, it is a refresh of *New Zealand after Nuclear War* (August 1987), authored by Wren with Tony Cairns and Judith Wright for the New Zealand Planning Council. A digital copy can be found on our website.

COVID-19 Nation Dates: A timeline of significant events in Aotearoa New Zealand's COVID-19 pandemic (attached)

Auditor-General John Ryan stated on the release of his 2022 report on Aotearoa New Zealand's COVID-19 response: 'In my view, we must avoid what the World Health Organization calls a cycle of "panic then forget" when it comes to responding to emergencies.' The first edition of our new book *COVID-19 Nation Dates: A timeline of significant events in Aotearoa New Zealand's COVID-19 pandemic* collects three years of events in a book that we hope will be of use to officials, policy analysts and of course those undertaking the Royal Commission.

Scenarios

In times of uncertainty it becomes increasingly difficult to predict the future. At such times there is an opportunity to move from projections to exploring a range of futures, in order to learn more about what might influence outcomes and what type of preparation or forward engagement might be useful. Scenarios are a useful tool for visualising possible futures and encouraging challenging conversations about trade-offs and how best to forward engage with existing and emerging risks and opportunities. To this end the Institute has recently published *Discussion Paper 2023/02 – Establishing national climate-related reference scenarios* and will shortly publish *Working Paper 2023/01 – List of publicly available national and local scenarios*. Going forward, we would like to see the Ministry for the Environment and/or NIWA prepare a set of national climate-related reference scenarios. This would ensure information is shared equally with all stakeholders (including Parliament, public servants, businesses, councils, iwi, communities and individuals) at the same time. This would not only bring about more informed discussions and collaborative innovation, but deliver a more united, aligned and committed response by stakeholders.

Next steps

We will undertake more research into key datasets such as government department strategy documents (see the Institute's publication *Government Department Strategies Index Handbook – He Puna Rautaki*), NZX-listed companies (with a focus on climate change reporting), scenarios, and the emerging Long-term Insights Briefings. We also hope to complete a fifth edition of our signature book *Nation Dates*, ready for the 54th New Zealand Parliament.

Over the next few months we will work on developing the concept of ecological corridors between national parks. I have just returned from visiting Bhutan, where I learned how they currently operate their ecological corridor network (what Bhutan calls 'biological corridors'). Interestingly their constitution requires a minimum of 60% of their total land to 'be maintained under forest cover for all time'. It proved an extraordinary trip, not only because of their innovation regarding conservation, but also in terms of climate change adaptation.

In tandem with protections on land, we are also exploring the extent to which New Zealand is failing to protect our marine spaces, especially those that are particularly ecologically significant. For instance, Cook Strait is considered to be the seabird capital of the world, and New Zealand the marine mammal capital of the world. New Zealand has the fifth-largest maritime exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the world, which suggests we have a significant responsibility as kaitiaki to manage and protect the flora and fauna that exist in our marine space. Target 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which New Zealand is a signatory, requires 30% of our internal waters (with the Marlborough Sounds likely to be the largest area) and 30% of our territorial sea to be protected by 2030. We are interested in understanding how New Zealand is planning to protect 30% of its marine space in just over six years (currently less than 7%* is protected), and are keen to work with government agencies on this.

TARGET 2: Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.

Our 2023 work programme is overleaf. As always, we welcome the opportunity to work with government agencies on any of the above.

Thank you again for your interest in and support of our work.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy McGuinness

Chief Executive

* Please note: Since sending this letter, the Institute has found the 7% figure to be questionable.

This figure was retrieved on 2nd of June 2023 from the Convention on Biological Diversity:

www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=nz. The Institute is in correspondence with MFAT and LINZ to determine the correct percentage (estimated to be around 10%).