

16 Hakihea 2020

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, kia ora koutou katoa,

To my friends, associates, and staff at BERL, whānau, clients, stakeholders, and supporters,

I am filled with a range of emotions in accepting the appointment to be Chair of the New Zealand Productivity Commission – Te Kōmihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa.

While I have tossed and turned many times on this decision, I probably always knew I would end up accepting this appointment.

Contributing to a transformation of the economic model and narrative towards one that values people and prioritises our role as kaitiaki o taonga is my kaupapa. It is a kaupapa I have shared with BERL.

My commitment to BERL has occupied my life for more than 20 years, and it will be a wrench to shift my focus to a new endeavour. However, this decision has been made much easier with the support of Hillmaré Schulze. I know that she will continue to lead BERL as Chief Economist of the research consultancy confronting the challenges facing 21st century Aotearoa. I thank her for her support of my decision. I also know the staff at BERL are more than committed to continuing this BERL kaupapa.

The opportunity to pursue my kaupapa from inside the establishment challenges me to step outside my comfort zone. Continuing my mahi from the outside ‘looking in’ would – for me – be a relatively comfortable option. But, in the future I am sure I would have regretted missing such an opportunity.

I am under no illusions as to the effort required to transform the establishment models of the economy. The power and influence of the status quo remains strong and influential. Nevertheless, I believe the voices of the excluded and disconnected must not only be heard, but respected. If productivity is ever to mean anything, then the wellbeing of those currently excluded and on the sidelines will be the true indicator of success.

My kaupapa remains strong, but I have changed course. I will continue to challenge the current establishment models, hopefully even more strongly now.

In anticipation, I thank you for your support.

Whether I become any more effective in pursuing my kaupapa remains to be seen, but it will not be for lack of effort.

Nō reira, ngā mihi,

