



HON DR NICK SMITH

Member of Parliament for Nelson

Dr Mark Prebble
State Services Commissioner
100 Molesworth Street
PO Box 329
Wellington

25th May 2006

Dear Sir,

I wish to lay a formal complaint with you in respect of yesterday's publication of the book *Gentle Footprints – Boot 'N' All* by the Ministry for the Environment, as I believe it is inappropriate expenditure in the context of the retirement of the CEO Barry Carbon.

The introduction says *This book is his parting gift to New Zealanders*. The problem is that this gift to New Zealanders is being paid for by these same New Zealanders and has cost \$125,000 to print and distribute without including the considerable staff time used. It is unprecedented for a book to be published on the departure of a CEO. The Ministry is not a particularly large department nor was his term of four years particularly long.

As State Services Commissioner, it is your role to set the tone of conduct for the senior public service. This book is sycophantic and contradicts a long-standing tradition of New Zealand public servants being low profile and not seeking this sort of adulation.

This book serves little public function. There has been strong criticism that New Zealand has not produced a proper State of the Environment Report since 1997. This has been excused by the Ministry on the basis of insufficient resources. It is insulting to then find the money to produce this sort of glossy publication that is so lacking in depth or quantitative analysis of the New Zealand environment.

This publication is inappropriate in the context of the tradition of the New Zealand public service and is an over-the-top response by the Ministry to the retirement of its CEO.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Dr Nick Smith MP
National Environment Spokesperson

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