

Questions and answers: Review of CAA organisational culture

The CAA are already conducting their own review into Avsec, how does this review differ?

The CAA has engaged Wellington based QC David Laurenson to conduct an independent investigation into allegations of bullying and harassment at the Aviation Security Service (Avsec).

The Ministry led review of CAA organisational culture has been requested by the Minister of Transport, Hon Phil Twyford.

The advisory team will assess historic reports of bullying and harassment at the authority, including Avsec, to review how they were handled and responded to. The review will not examine current allegations or complaints.

Any new complainants identified as part of the review process will be advised of the pathways for the resolution of complaints.

Who are the external specialists supporting the review?

RDC Group has been appointed to provide project oversight of the review, led by Director Doug Craig.

As a former Deputy Commissioner of SSC and Deputy Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development, Mr Craig brings a high degree of specialist capability and skills which are necessary to support the successful delivery of the review.

Barrister Rachael Schmidt-McCleave has been appointed to provide an assessment of incidences of bullying and harassment, including how they were handled and responded to.

Ms Schmidt-McCleave joined the Independent Bar from Minter Ellison Rudd Watts in 2014. In the past year she has completed reviews for two Crown entities which focused on allegations of bullying and harassment.

What happens at the end of the review process?

The Ministry will provide a draft, and then a final written report to the Minister which sets out the Ministry's findings and any recommendations on the matters which are in scope of the review, together with any matters of concern.

The Ministry will consult its draft report with the CAA before the final review report is submitted to the Minister.

What is the Ministry of Transport's role to monitor the CAA?

The Ministry, as Crown monitor, assesses the capability and performance of the respective boards of transport Crown entities; Civil Aviation Authority, Maritime NZ, NZ Transport Agency and Transport Accident Investigation Commission.

It is the role of the transport Crown entity board to provide governance to ensure it effectively performs its roles and functions, as well as to deliver on the Government priorities. This includes assessing and monitoring the capability and performance of their respective agency. The board also have an important role in setting the strategic priorities for the agency within the context of the Government's transport priorities. The Ministry's role as Crown monitor is to assess the performance of the Board in this context.

In addition, the Minister holds regular fortnightly or monthly meetings with the CAA, MNZ, the NZTA and TAIC. In performing its role, the Ministry also holds regular meetings and other less formal interactions between these entities.

What other regulatory stewardship activity is the Ministry of Transport conducting with the CAA or the civil aviation sector?

In addition to leading the review of CAA organisational culture, the Ministry is currently conducting an assessment of the regulatory system governing helicopters and small aircraft operating under Civil Aviation Rule Part 135.

The regulatory systems assessment will take a detailed look at the performance of the system that governs small aircraft and helicopters operating under Civil Aviation Rule Part 135.

It will involve targeted engagement with key organisations and industry participants to understand how the system is currently operating. A report back to the Minister of Transport is expected in early 2020.