

STATEMENT FROM MORAG WOODLEY, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS:

As Deputy Secretary of the Shared Services Branch, I am pleased to note the controversy regarding the professional reputation of one of our staff, Simon Pleasants, has now been resolved.

Mr Pleasants is the public servant who, in 2009, was accused by the Whale Oil blog of politically-motivated behaviour during the course of carrying out his normal duties. In 2014, this accusation was the subject of further media coverage in the wake of the publication of a book by Mr Nicky Hager.

Mr Pleasants has previously made no comment on these matters in the interests of keeping out of the political limelight, as is consistent with the role of a public servant. After the 2014 general election, Mr Pleasants raised the matter with the Whale Oil blog, and subsequently the relevant blogposts were immediately removed.

The Department is advised that Mr Pleasants has now received an assurance, through the Privacy Commissioner, from the Hon. Judith Collins that at no time did she consider Mr Pleasants had leaked information, as was suggested by the Whale Oil blog. Mr Pleasants has indicated he accepts Mrs Collins' statement that she had no knowledge about why Mr Pleasants' work title and contact details were sought by the Whale Oil blog, and that she made no allegation to the Whale Oil blog that Mr Pleasants might have breached confidence.

The Department of Internal Affairs is pleased Mr Pleasants' reputation as a professional public servant has been upheld and notes that Mr Pleasants now considers the matter closed.

Mr Pleasants has also asked for the opportunity to thank the Chief Executive of the Department of Internal Affairs, Colin MacDonald and the Public Service Association for their support in resolving the matter.

The Department will provide no further comment on this matter.

ENDS