

Is this government trying to do too much?

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A political narrative about this government being increasingly inclined to make unexpected and value-destroying interventions as well as being only moderately competent at policy execution is gaining ground. One unexamined element of this phenomenon is the scale of its agenda. Setting aside the enormous distraction of focus from BAU caused by the covid response, the government is attempting reforms of historic scale in several areas. Is it setting itself up to fail?

Vaccine rollout scramble

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Ministers and the Ministry of Health have known since the covid-19 pandemic began in earnest a little over a year ago that a vaccination rollout would eventually be critical to reopening NZ's borders. It had known since early 2019 – a year pre-covid- that existing vaccination systems needed replacement. Yet there are signs everywhere that vaccination planning is behind schedule, with Accenture only starting to build a vaccination booking system last month.

Ministers watching power price shock

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A doubling of wholesale power prices since February is putting larger pulp and steel mills exposed to spot prices under extreme financial pressure, generating headlines that suggest thousands of jobs are at risk. Minister Megan Woods is worried. Generator-retailers are pushing back, asking why large electricity users have chosen such significant exposure to the spot market.

National grabs housing initiative as prices keep rising

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The shock of Labour's late-March housing package and its bombshell interest deductibility move is wearing off before any signs that house price inflation has taken a knock. Landlords have escalated their promises to hike rents, triggering calls for rent controls that the government first toyed with, and then rejected. National grabbed the initiative back this week with an emergency members bill aimed at providing more of a carrot to councils than Labour's stick.

Economic focus turns to bank lending rules

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The Reserve Bank delivered a copy-and-paste type of monetary policy decision this week that left all its settings for interest rates, its bond buying programme and its cheap lending facility to banks in place at the same levels as its February decision. Focus now turns to the May 6 Financial Stability Report, where some type of limit on interest-only loans to landlords is expected.

Will the Aussie tourists come and will our workers go?

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Quarantine-free trans-Tasman travel begins on Monday, with signs Australian tourist numbers may be smaller than first thought. Employers' fears of an exodus of highly-skilled local staff for better pay and lower rents in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane are also growing.

Is this government trying to do too much?

Any government would be sorely tested by a crisis as severe or as long-lasting as the covid-19 pandemic.

So far, the Ardern administration has done well enough at handling this to be rewarded with an absolute parliamentary majority.

Armed with that and three years of policy development between 2017 and 2020, the government is now **embarking on a range of fundamental reforms that may be the most wide-ranging since the fourth Labour government** in its 1984-87 term.

Major areas of reform or new policy include:

- resource management and urban planning law reform;
- setting climate change policy for the next generation, which could include substantial changes to electricity and other energy market dynamics;
- 'three waters' reform;
- de facto local government reform by simultaneously forcing 3 waters amalgamations and introducing new funding mechanisms;
- freshwater reforms;

and **potential to push further into other areas where change could have significant economic impact.**

For example, proposals by the Retirement Commissioner to require retirement village owners to mandatorily buy back units and share capital gains with tenants or their estates have alarmed the sector.

The list above is not comprehensive, but is very substantial. The **two key questions to consider** are whether:

- the government and current NZ public sector policymaking cadre has the capability to devise good policy in so many areas of fundamental significance to the NZ economy;
- the government has the political skills to execute these policies well, notwithstanding its ability for the next two and a half years to pass any legislation it wishes without parliamentary support partners.

Vaccine rollout

The government is walking a **political tightrope** on the vaccination rollout preparations.

There is distress and disappointment in the Beehive that the **Ministry of Health did not make earlier progress** on the clear need for a national immunisation system earlier than it has.

However, covid response minister **Chris Hipkins** is obliged to put a brave face on issues such as the fact that health officials had known for a year before covid came along that the existing National Immunisation Register needed to be replaced.

The business case for this was only written in October last year and procurement has yet to begin.

In the meantime, officials and their agencies have been iterating temporary and stop-gap systems first to track and trace people through covid outbreaks, then to register the first round of immunisations, and now to allow NZers to make a booking for immunisation once the mass rollout begins in July.

The **main embarrassment in the last week** has been the discovery that a small but unknown number of border and MIQ workers have been operating outside any centralised monitoring system for covid testing.

However, **equally concerning** is confirmation that the ministry's chosen contractor for the booking system, **Accenture, only began work last month on a system that needs to be in place by the end of May.** Even as a bolt-on configuration of an existing system, that is an extraordinarily tight timeframe for a major IT upgrade.

Further evidence of poor preparation can be seen in the **scramble by DHBs to sign commercial tenancies for large-scale vaccination centres.** The search for those began early last month, representing another windfall for commercial property leasing agents, especially as the search is understood to have prioritised securing space ahead of rental levels.

Power price shock spreads

The chances of regulatory or ministerial intervention in the electricity market are growing along with the spike over recent weeks in wholesale prices.

Large factories without hedges in place are curtailing production and layoffs are becoming likely.

Heavy use of coal-fired power to make up for the gas and water shortages is compounding the political pain.

Prices are running at more than double long-term averages because of shortages of supply from the Pohokura gas fields and relatively low lake levels.

NZ Steel's Glenbrook mill is curtailing production and **Norske Skog Tasman's** pulp and paper mill ran at 40% and 60% of capacity last month. **Methanex** has also warned it may lay off workers after idling its plants in early April.

The Major Electricity Users Group's chair **John Harbord** is joining the chorus of unhedged retail electricity suppliers who argue that spot prices are

excessive relative to the extent of the supply risk the system is managing.

Energy Minister **Megan Woods** has asked **MBIE** and the **Electricity Authority** to report back on whether the prices are reasonable and expects a response “within weeks.”

“If ‘no’ then I will go back and ask for further advice.”

It’s not clear what the EA or the government could do in the short term to ease the pain and Woods has said the various tweaks to policy made after the 2018 Electricity Price Review needed to be given time to work.

However, the spiking prices may fuel the argument for the government’s \$100m investigation of a massive ‘battery’ pumped storage scheme at Lake Onslow which could be used to squash such price spikes.

At this stage, Woods has kicked for touch on whether she might dust off advice on structurally separating the gen-tailers. “Is it something that may have to be revisited in the future? Probably, maybe,” she was quoted as saying.

Housing pain deepens

The government’s late-March package of housing measures, including the shock interest deductibility move for landlords, has done little as yet to ease the political or economic pain.

REINZ reported this week its House Price Index rose another 2.7% in March and was up 24% for the year. Houses also sold in March at their fastest pace in **REINZ**’s recorded history and the highest proportion of sales via auction it had ever seen.

Mortgage brokers and real estate agents reported lower levels of demand from investors in auction rooms, via mortgage applications and at open homes, but this has yet to affect prices.

REINZ’s acting ceo **Wendy Alexander** said she expected prices to keep rising in the coming months.

Polls of landlords show they at least want to increase rents to compensate for lower after-tax profits, with more than 74% in a **Property Investors Federation** poll saying they expected to raise rents.

The intensity of the debate around possible rent increases also raised the spectre of rent controls, which Finance Minister **Grant Robertson** initially refused to rule out, and then said were unlikely.

National grabs initiative

National leader **Judith Collins** would have been grateful this week for a couple of distractions from the low-level rumblings about her leadership. They

included strong challenges to the government from covid-19 spokesman Chris Bishop over testing at the border and vagueness and slowness of the Ministry of Health’s vaccine rollout plans and transparency.

Also, housing spokeswoman **Nicola Willis**’ new proposal for a carrot for councils of a \$50,000 grant for each new consent over the five year average took the initiative back off the government in the housing debate.

PM **Jacinda Ardern** said the carrot wasn’t needed as the government had its own \$3.8b infrastructure grant plan, although the terms and details of it have yet to go through cabinet and be presented to councils.

National’s proposal for an emergency members bill to force councils to open up 30 years’ worth of land supply along with the carrot of the grants did force the Government to concede it would need to speed up moves to densify cities.

By **prevaricating under questioning** about his support for Collins as leader and rumours of forming a leadership ticket with Christopher Luxon, **we judge Simon Bridges to have made his chances of mounting a leadership bid weaker** than they were already.

There is **simply no reason for National to consider a leadership change at this stage of the electoral cycle**, particularly in the absence of a clearly better alternative.

Faster housing densification?

In response to National’s intervention, Housing Minister **Megan Woods** and Environment Minister **David Parker** both suggested they wanted the current National Policy Statement on Urban Development, which sets a 2024 deadline for councils to make it easier to build apartments in suburban areas, to be bought forward.

The Auckland Unitary Plan-style order to councils is not popular with many councillors and mayors in the biggest cities, with intense debate and opposition already seen in Christchurch and Auckland.

Meanwhile, signs emerged that Local Government Minister **Nanaia Mahuta** would bring plans for a wider review of the sector’s governing legislation and financing to Cabinet in the coming weeks.

The financial and political pressures on the sector

Coming up

May 4 - Parliament resumes for three week session

May 5 - Reserve Bank to publish Financial Stability Report

May 20 - Budget 2021 due

May 31 - Climate Commission advice due

May - RMA reform legislation exposure draft due this month

and its funding relationships with the Beehive are growing.

The pressures were evident in **Palmerston North** this week when the council admitted its long term plan would breach its debt limit covenants because of heavy water investments.

But it cautioned the plan was in effect a placeholder because of 3 waters reforms, suggesting it expected to lose both its water assets and debt from its balance sheet.

The bubble's big HR risk

The nation's borders, hangars and boardrooms have been in intense preparation mode this week for the opening of the Trans-Tasman travel bubble from Monday.

Initial enthusiasm from tourism and hospitality businesses has given way in the last week to fears staff itching for a change - or more affordable housing and higher wages - may jump across the Tasman once they get the chance.

CEO Retreat 2021

The next Hugo Group CEO Retreat is scheduled to run from **dinner on Thursday August 19 to lunch on Saturday August 21**.

The programme will again bring members a mixture of actionable business insights and the traditional Retreat "deep dive" into domestic and global affairs.

Mark your calendar now.

Apartment and inner city rents have fallen sharply over the last year in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane because of a surge of new supply from buildings erected over the last five years, and a drop in demand for inner-city living during lockdowns, particularly in Melbourne.

Demand for workers in Australia is also white-hot.

Australia this week reported faster-than-expected employment growth and a fall in the unemployment rate to 5.6%.

Seek Australia reported the highest job ads volumes posted in a month in its 23 year history, and the lowest ratio of applications to jobs in nine years.

MIQ space opens, then evaporates

There was also disappointment that the opening of the bubble may result in little extra space for skilled workers coming from overseas.

Over 100,000 people a week were initially expected to fly between Australia and New Zealand without having to stay in MIQ, adding \$1b in extra spending to the economy in 2021.

But 500 rooms will be kept for contingency use in the event of lockdowns in either NZ or Australia, while MIQ rooms in some hotels will be decommissioned. Between 1,000 to 1,300 rooms per fortnight should open up.

Some facilities destined for decommissioning may be used to quarantine Pacific Island and other low-risk countries' arrivals.

Hipkins claimed this week that there are, at present, significant numbers of MIQ spaces becoming available in coming weeks as Australian travellers drop out of the system.

The government suspended flights from India until April 28 after a spike in infections at NZ's border.

ScoMo visit in early May?

Planning is underway for a visit to NZ by Australian PM **Scott Morrison** as Jacinda Ardern did a round of Australian media calls urging Australians to visit NZ.

Morrison is likely to hold the first Aust-NZ leaders' meeting since covid lockdowns began, possibly in Queenstown, most likely in early May.

Climate change

The government announced a ban on new low and medium temperature coal fired boilers from the end of this year and plans to phase out existing ones by 2037. An option proposed is to also prohibit other new fossil fuel boilers where suitable alternative economically viable technology exists.

The **2021 Greenhouse Gas Inventory** shows gross emissions were 82.3m tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2019, up 2% from 2018. Net emissions in 2019 were 54.9 Mt CO₂-e, also an increase of 2% from 2018. Greenhouse gas emissions were down 4.8% for the year to Dec, largely due to a fall in transport emissions because of covid-19, Stats NZ said. Total emissions quarter-on-quarter fell in Dec, after a strong rebound in Sept, this was in line with economic activity.

Upgraded Parliament

A new six-storey Museum St building behind Parliament House is proposed to house an expanded parliamentary precinct, on land currently used as a carpark. The project is expected to cost upwards of \$100m.

Polling

The latest Roy Morgan poll said support for Labour was up 0.5 points to 45.5% in March while the Greens dropped 1.5 points to 12% since the last poll in Feb. **National was down 6 points to 23%**. Act was on 11% and up 3.5 points from Feb. The Roy Morgan government confidence rating fell 14 points to 135.5. This was at 135 a year ago in March 2020 before covid fully hit. 61.5% (down 8 points) said NZ was heading in the right direction and 26% (up 6 points) said it was 'heading in the wrong direction'. ■

Focus turns to interest-only

With monetary policy firmly on hold and remaining loose well into next year, the **focus is turning to how much more pain the Reserve Bank is willing to apply to landlords with limits on interest-only lending.**

Before the late March tax deductibility shock, the expectation was that interest-only lending to landlords, which represents almost a third of investor lending and over 10% of total lending, would be curtailed.

But the potential shock to demand from the tax move may soften that fresh limit for landlords.

The Reserve Bank is due to publish its views on lending limits with its Financial Stability Report on May 4.

Meanwhile, this week the **Reserve Bank** held the official cash rate at 0.25% and reiterated it is prepared to lower the rate if necessary as it is confident inflation will be sustained at the 2% per annum target midpoint, and employment is at or above its maximum sustainable level.

The first rate hike is now expected no sooner than mid-2022.

Credit ratings agency happy

Standard & Poor's said the downside risks to NZ's financial institutions are receding and the outlook is now stable, reflecting the NZ economy's faster recovery from the covid pandemic than most advanced economies.

It expects credit losses in the next two years will remain relatively low at about 0.3% of gross loans and advances.

Can firms deliver price hikes?

A key feature of this week's Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion for the March quarter from **NZIER** was signs firms' desire to raise prices.

The survey showed a slight increase in confidence, although most of the survey was done before the late March housing package, which is likely to dent sentiment.

A net 33% of firms reported higher costs, up from 30% in the Dec quarter. A net 28% said they expected to raise prices, almost double the 15% seen in the previous quarter. But only 8% were able to raise prices in the March quarter, less than half those who said they planned to raise prices.

This has been a pattern for nearly a decade. **Firms see higher costs and want to pass on higher prices, but can't because of competition or deflation elsewhere.**

A preliminary read of the ANZ Bank's April survey showed **headline confidence becoming more pessimistic**, with a net 8% believing the broad economic outlook will get worse over the coming year. The own-activity measure was steady with 16% expecting better times for their own businesses.

Briefly

The **International Monetary Fund** predicts a swift and **strong global economic 6% expansion in 2021** as vaccines are distributed.

In the Feb 2021 year, border restrictions due to covid led to a provisional net loss of 1,400 non-NZ citizens and a net gain of 18,900 NZ citizens made up an **overall net migration gain of 17,400**. This compares to 85,000 in the Feb 2020 year.

An Infometrics report found up to **\$24b worth of untapped global demand for NZ products**. It said there was room for growth in wine, seafood and aquaculture, wood products and logs, as well as food products.

The **ANZ World Commodity Price Index** lifted 6.1% month on month in March to reach a record high. The strength in the index was **driven primarily by the sharp lift in dairy prices**. In local currency terms the index gained 7.4% m/m to also reach a record high, supported by a 0.4% reduction in the trade weighted index.

Dairy commodity prices gained 0.3% at the latest **Global Dairy Trade** event. Whole milk powder had no price change at an average US\$4085/t.

There were 15,498 **new vehicle registrations** in March 2021, 86.3% up on March 2020. Year to date the market is up 27.6% (9,046 units) compared to the first quarter of 2020.

Job advertising rebounded strongly in March, recovering to be higher than two years ago, according to Seek's monthly figures. There was a 10.6% jump in job ads last month compared with Feb, the biggest rise since July 2020. This was despite six days of Level 3 lockdown for Auckland, and Level 2 for the rest of NZ, at the start of March. Advertising for jobs in Auckland were up 13.3%.

Nearly 1.5m kilometres of **road user charges** were bought in March, the **second highest number ever** after June 2020 when people were in catch-up mode after lockdown.

There was a lift in retail card spending in March following a fall in the lockdown-disrupted Feb month, Stats NZ said. Seasonally adjusted retail card spending rose by \$53m (0.9%), compared with Feb deterioration. ■

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Banks, insurers and fund managers

Fitch Ratings put **Westpac NZ**'s A+ credit rating on negative watch because of its Australian parent's plan to review its ownership of the business.

ASB Bank reported it had overstated its capital position in its half year disclosure statement to the end of Dec because it had "identified certain specialised lending exposures that were incorrectly classified as corporate lending exposures".

That meant ASB reported its tier 1 common equity ratio as 12.2%, but it was actually 11.6%, although this was still above the effective current capital requirement of at least 10.5%. It will be one to watch though, given ASB, along with other big-four banks, have to increase their tier 1 capital over seven years from July 1 2021 to at least 16%.

Hong Kong-based **Sun Hung Kai & Co** launched a fund to buy mortgage loans in Australia, NZ, China, South Korea and Southeast Asia. The fund aims to raise up to US\$300m (NZ\$426.6m) to add to the US\$100m it will contribute.

The **Reserve Bank** has established a new, stand-alone enforcement department to promote confidence in compliance across regulated sectors. The central bank said the new function is operationally separate from the bank's supervision team, but both arms will work closely together.

Most large businesses, banks, insurers and investment funds will be required to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions from the start of the 2022 financial year under legislation introduced into Parliament.

Energy and resources

A rival bidder for **Tilt Renewables** emerged at the eleventh hour today, forcing a halt in shares in the Trans-Tasman wind farm owner.

Infratil said last month it was selling its 65.6% shareholding to Sydney-based **PowAR** and **Mercury NZ**, which already owns a fifth of Tilt, for \$1.93b. The AFR reported Canada's **CDPQ** pension fund was the new bidder.

The govt announced a ban on new low and medium temperature coal fired boilers from the end of this year and plans to phase out existing ones by 2037. An option proposed is to also prohibit other new fossil fuel boilers where suitable alternative economically viable technology.

Renewable electricity stocks had a rollercoaster ride as investors tried to work out the impact of reduced weighting of **Meridian** and **Contact** in **S&P's Global Clean Energy Index**.

Manufacturing and construction

New border exemptions were approved to allow overseas staff to work on **Kainga Ora**'s build programme. **Immigration NZ** said four engineers, two system programmers and a supervisor had been approved so far, although none had yet arrived.

Kainga Ora said contractors could use the policy to bring in builders for the 3,200-home programme.

Red Stag opened a new cross laminated timber plant in Rotorua, which it said would help alleviate the country's building timber shortage. The \$50m CLT factory is co-located with Red Stag's sawmill and part-funded by a \$15m loan from the **Provincial Growth Fund**.

MBIE notified that all priority earthquake prone buildings in high seismic risk areas had been identified by councils. The next step is to identify non-priority buildings and for medium risk areas to identify their priority buildings, by July 1 2022.

Primary sector, food and beverages

NZ Apples and Pears is forecasting a further drop in harvest this year due to a lack of pickers. The industry now expects the export share of the gross national crop to be around 347,718 metric tonnes or 19.3m cartons. This is 3m cartons or 14% below 2020, representing a \$95m-\$100m cut in export earnings.

Synlait Milk reported a 76% drop in net profit in the six months to Jan 31 and forecast significant uncertainty. Net profit was \$6.4m as infant formula sales fell 16% to 18,085 metric tonnes.

Leon Clement will step down as chief executive of Synlait Milk at the end of April. **John Penno**, Synlait Milk co-founder, will assume the role of interim CEO until a permanent replacement is appointed.

Westland Milk will invest \$40m to double the capacity of its consumer butter making plant to 42,000 tonnes a year.

Seeka and **Opotiki Packing and Cool Storage** are to merge in an all-share deal where OPAC shareholders receive 1.48333 new Seeka shares for every 1 OPAC share, valuing the net assets of OPAC at \$33.94m. Seeka will assume approximately \$25.06m of debt as part of the acquisition bringing the total deal to \$59m.

Apiculture NZ asked the govt to support a national discussion on glyphosate weedkiller use as consumers become more concerned about chemical residues. A number of shipments to Japan were recently rejected for exceeding acceptable trace levels.

The govt announced a ban on the live animal export trade with two year phase out. In 2019, the value of livestock exports was \$54m, but the practice has been

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criticised as animal cruelty.

Comvita improved its full-year earnings guidance from a range of \$20m to \$23m to \$22.5m to \$25.5m due to strong growth in China and North America, strong digital sales and continued efficiencies.

Geoff Ross will stand down from the board of **Savor** (formerly Moa) in May. It finalised a \$6m capital raise to fund the acquisition of several **Hip Group** restaurant brands with the Cushing family's **H&G Group** stake rising 10.13% to 12.2%. **David Poole, Sheena Henderson and Rich Frank** are also resigning from Savor's board. Two independent directors – **GreenMount Advisory's Ryan Davis** and HR specialist **Louise Alexander** – will join the board.

Retail and wholesale

Clothing and big box retailers are doing well out of the post-lockdown spending splurge, particularly if they have strong online channels.

Kathmandu's underlying earnings were in line with guidance at \$48.2m in the six months to 31 Jan, up from \$40.5m underlying earnings a year earlier. It also resumed paying a dividend, underpinned by a strong result from **Rip Curl**.

The **Warehouse Group** will resume paying a dividend after reporting a record first-half result, but has lowered how much it will pay out to shareholders from 75%-to-85% of full-year adjusted net profit to at least 70%. Net profit was \$111m in the six months to Jan 31, versus \$46.2m in the same period a year earlier. Group sales were up 7.4% at \$1.8b, with online sales growth of 50.3%.

Hallenstein Glasson said sales in the first seven weeks of the winter season were already 17.8% higher than last year after reporting a 28.6% lift in first-half net profit. Net profit was \$19.8m in the six months to Feb 1 versus \$15.4m in the prior year. The result was in line with guidance.

Michael Hill International said same-store sales were up 16.4%, with all store sales up 11.6% for the third quarter from the same quarter a year ago.

South Island tourism operator **Wayfare Group** is looking for a minority investor as it prepares for the return of overseas visitors. The firm runs the **Real Journeys, Go Orange, Cardrona Alpine Resort, Treble Cone and International Antarctic Centre**.

Telcos, media and entertainment

In the final concession that China's **Huawei** won't be involved in any of the three 5G networks being rolled out at the moment because of national security concerns, **2degrees** announced that **Ericsson** is its sole 5G network partner. Huawei vendor-financed

2degrees' existing 4G network.

SkyCity severed ties with junket operators that recruit high-rollers for organised casino trips, fund their gambling and collect whatever debts are owed. This follows an Australian inquiry into **Crown Casino** that found junket operators were a money laundering risk, with some linked to organised crime groups.

Sky TV plans to sell two of its three buildings at its Mt Wellington base in Auckland as they're not being used or fit for purpose.

A high-profile radio host resigned from a **MediaWorks** radio show. The host, who has not been on air since mid-March, was one of two men stood down this month ahead of an independent investigation into the company's culture.

Transport and logistics

Air NZ delayed an equity capital raising planned for the second quarter until the third quarter and agreed an expansion and extension of its credit facility with the govt from \$900m to \$1.5b, and by 16 months to September 2023, albeit at a reduced interest rate.

Mike Pero grounded the launch of **Pasifika Air** which he had hoped would be part of a two-way travel bubble with the Cook Islands citing uncertainty over the timing of quarantine-free travel and the cost of committing to aircraft leases.

A report into the liquidation of Hamilton-based **Pacific Aerospace** has creditors' claims at \$41.2m, with \$35m of this related party debt.

Capital markets

Summerset Group appointed **Mark Verbiest** to succeed **Rob Campbell** as chair. Verbiest already chairs **Meridian Energy** and **Freightways** and is a director of **ANZ Bank**.

Scott Pickering resigned as ACC ceo after eight years in the role. His last day will be June 30 and a replacement search has begun.

Courts, legal and regulation

The prominent businessman found guilty of sexual assault will appeal the verdicts. The man was found guilty of three sexual assault charges and two charges of trying to dissuade a witness from giving evidence.

People moves

Oceania Healthcare appointed **Brent Pattison** as its new ceo. Pattison joined the company in Jan last year as chief financial officer and became acting ceo when predecessor **Earl Gasparich** left Oceania to head rival **Metlifecare**. 🇳🇿

LEGISLATION

Urgency used on landlords

Tax deductibility move passed in a hurry.

- *Italics denote update from previous edition of Hugovision*
- A full compendium of the legislation before the House is available on The Hugo Group website, www.thehugogroup.com

Bills introduced

Financial Sector (Climate-related Disclosures and Other Matters) Amendment Bill - Introduced on April 12. Creates a regime requiring climate-related disclosures by large listed issuers, banks, insurers and fund managers. First reading on April 15 and referred to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee, to be reported back in 4 months and 1 day. Opposed by just ACT.

Immigration (COVID-19 Response) Amendment Bill - Introduced on April 1. Extends the repeal date of the government's temporary powers relating to visa rule variations in response to the covid-19 outbreak by 2 years until May 2023. First reading on April 8 and referred to the Education and Workforce Committee to be reported back by April 29. Opposed by National and ACT who objected to the very short time frame for submissions.

Income Tax (Adjustment of Taxable Income Ranges) Amendment Bill - Member's bill in the name of **Simon Bridges** introduced on April 8. Would require income tax brackets to be reviewed every three years to keep them in line with inflation.

Incorporated Societies Bill - Introduced on March 17. Reforms the 1908 law for incorporated societies. It put in place a modern framework of basic legal, governance, and accountability obligations, and for those who run them, modelled on the Companies Act. First reading on April 6 supported by all parties and referred to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee.

Regulatory Standards Bill - Member's bill in the name of **David Seymour** introduced on April 8. The bill would set up a set of principles which regulation (Acts of Parliament and secondary legislation) would be required to be benchmarked against. It also provides monitoring of the certification process through a new role for the courts.

Secondhand Dealers and Pawnbrokers (Electronic Records) Amendment Bill - Member's bill in the name of **Andrew Bayly** introduced on March 25. Amends the Secondhand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act to enable Police to recover and trace stolen property as well as apprehend offenders involved in this activity.

Synthetic Urine (Prohibition on Importation, Supply and Acquisition to Pass a Workplace Drug Test) Bill - Member's bill in the name of **Matt Doocey** introduced on March 25. Seeks to prohibit the importation, supply and acquisition of synthetic urine to pass a workplace drug test.

Bills in progress

Crown Pastoral Land Reform Bill - Introduced on July 16 2020. Report back extended again to July 6.

Financial Market Infrastructures Bill - Introduced on Dec 17. Second reading on March 16 with all parties in agreement. Committee stage completed on April 4.

Holidays (Increasing Sick Leave) Amendment Bill - Introduced on Dec 1 2020 under Urgency. Reported back on March 25 without amendment. National opposed the bill. The Greens support the bill, but raised concerns about how long an employee had to work before qualifying.

Lawyers and Conveyancers (Employed Lawyers Providing Free Legal Services) Amendment Bill - Introduced on July 28, a member's bill in the name of **Chris Bishop**. First reading on March 24 and sent to the Justice Committee with the support of all parties.

Sunscreen (Product Safety Standard) Bill - Member's bill in the name of **Todd Muller** drawn from the ballot on March 11. It requires the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to set safety standards for sunscreen. First reading completed on April 7 with the support of all parties. Referred to the Health Committee.

Water Services Bill - Introduced on July 28 2020. Report back extended from June 8 to August 11.

Bills passed or defeated

Accident Compensation (Notice of Decisions) Amendment Bill - Introduced on July 30, a member's bill in the name of **Simon Watts**. First reading on April 7 and voted down with just National and ACT opposed

Adverse Weather-affected Timber Recovery on Conservation Lands Bill - First reading on April 7 and voted down with just National and ACT in favour.

Holidays (Bereavement Leave for Miscarriage) Amendment Bill - A bill in the name of **Virginia Andersen** drawn from the ballot on August 9 2019. Would make it clear the unplanned death of a foetus constitutes grounds for up to 3 days bereavement leave for the mother and her partner or spouse. First reading on Dec 10, supported by all parties and sent to the Education and Workforce Committee. Reported back on July 27 2020 with minor changes. Second reading on July 29 with all parties in support. Committee stage completed on March 10 2021 and third reading completed on March 24 with the support of all parties.

Local Government (Rating of Whenua Māori) Amendment Bill - Introduced on Feb 27. Committee stage March 17 and third reading on April 16 with National and ACT remaining opposed.

Taxation (Annual Rates for 2020-21, Feasibility Expenditure, and Remedial Matters) Bill - Introduced on June 4 2020. Passed through remaining stages with National and ACT opposed on March 23.