

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins MP  
Leader of the Labour Party  
Parliament House  
Wellington 6160

Sent by email: [chris.hipkins@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:chris.hipkins@parliament.govt.nz)

CC: Hon Willie Jackson MP, [willie.jackson@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:willie.jackson@parliament.govt.nz);  
Chris Bramwell, Chief of Staff, [chris.bramwell@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:chris.bramwell@parliament.govt.nz)

Kia ora Chris,

### **Bullying Cover Up by Hon Willie Jackson MP**

We need your help.

Willie has put himself at serious risk that will impact his political role. He has become very stubborn and refuses to listen to sensible advice. My assessment is he will only listen to you.

#### **1. Summary**

- a) Willie orchestrated the removal of the Chair of the Manukau Urban Māori Authority board earlier this year to cover up serious allegations of bullying against his wife Tania Rangiheuea. Other senior Labour Party members have participated in the cover up.
- b) Tania is the chief executive of MUMA. Willie was the chief executive before he became a member of parliament. MUMA is based at the Waatea Marae. Willie is the chair of the marae.
- c) The Chair has asked me to assist reaching an amicable resolution regarding his removal. Willie has ignored repeated requests for a hui or a resolution.

## 2. Background

- a) Several weeks after I moved on from my role as HR Advisor to MUMA I received a phone call from Deborah Mahuta-Coyle, who, with Mike Tukaki, was undertaking a MUMA organisational review. Deborah and Mike hold senior positions at MUMA. You know both Mike and Deborah from when they held senior roles in the Beehive.
- b) Deborah said Mike and her were alarmed at feedback on bullying and other misconduct by the chief executive when interviewing managers. Deborah believed MUMA would not survive if Tania remained. I was shocked and said they had a responsibility to raise their concerns with the Chair.
- c) Later the Chair called me saying the allegations were serious and confirmed both managers threatened resignation if Tania was not removed as chief executive. The Chair was also contacted by another senior manager threatening resignation.
- d) I understand the Chair raised the matter with the board, and he and a senior board member met with Tania.
- e) After that meeting Willie contacted the Chair claiming to be the CEOs employment representative. At a one-on-one meeting Willie demanded the Chair close any investigation down and apologise to Tania and the board. When the Chair did not agree to do so, Willie said he would have him removed.
- f) Within days Willie contacted individual board members and arranged a conference call that removed the Chair from his position. The Chair says he was not presented with the reasons for his arbitrary removal. His phone and email access were disconnected immediately after this meeting. When the Chair sought legal advice, another meeting was called without him, and he was removed from the board completely. Attempts by the Chair to contact the board have been ignored since.
- g) On the same day I received a call from Deborah who was very distraught, saying she was going to resign, go to the media, and contact you. I advised her against that action and to instead meet with Willie. She did, and she remains at MUMA.

- h) Shortly afterwards Willie phoned me and confirmed he had organised the removal of the Chair and reported the three managers had withdrawn their allegations and apologised. I understand they all received promotions and/or pay rises.
- i) Willie then appointed his electorate agent Kiri Skipworth, Ella Henry, and party stalwart Jerome Mika onto the board.
- j) I privately wrote to Willie three weeks ago once again asking for a meeting to confidentially resolve this matter and some outstanding bullying cases. No response.
- k) I then wrote to the whole board outlining the situation and a request for a meeting. No response. An earlier letter to the board secretary and chair was ignored.
- l) Instead, I got a lawyer's letter on Wednesday focussed on attacking me personally, without adequately addressing the issues. The employment matters can be dealt with in the mediation process. But the misconduct in the removal of the former MUMA chair is not an employment matter.
- m) Willie is not a member of MUMA or its board. He is a senior Labour Party member of parliament who acted to protect his spouse to cover several serious bullying allegations. His transgression is he used his mana and position to direct members of the board to carry out his decision. He compromised all the board members in their fiduciary responsibilities, let alone in their moral and ethical values. His decision not to engage since on this matter says it all.
- n) Darleen Tana was removed from parliament for less. That is not what I want.

### **3. Request for Assistance**

- a) As you will be meeting Willie tomorrow night at the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election I would appreciate you telling Willie the importance of resolving the situation he caused.
- b) Further, you advise him of the urgency to meet with the former Chair and myself, as his representative, to reach agreement on restoring the former Chair's mana. Too much time has passed so reinstatement is probably

unrealistic. Some compensation will inevitably need to be considered for the hurt and damage done to his mana and reputation.

c) I want this meeting in the next seven days.

You and I understand the politics of this letter. But the matters raised are important and Willie pretending they will go away is not sustainable. It requires your leadership.

I would appreciate hearing back from someone by Tuesday.

Ngā mihi,



Matt McCarten  
0295 684 422

### **Additional Information**

Below are factors that will add to your understanding why we have reached an impasse.

- a) Given my relationship with Willie, I have been reluctant to be involved. I have a lot of other work that needs doing. But none of us should ever look away when vulnerable people are being bullied. I had always hoped we could sit down and settle the problems with a commitment by MUMA to change the workplace culture. Instead, it has just been an endless battle. My assessment is having you speak to Willie will motivate him to find a way to resolve the current impasse.
- b) I only got involved in case work when Mike contacted me months ago saying he was resigning over Tania's behaviour and asking if I would take up a case of an employee who had been bullied by Tania. I am an employment advocate and a volunteer secretary of a small union. Shortly afterwards I accepted two other cases.
- c) Frankly, the three cases I accepted were open and shut cases, and I assumed we could sit down and quickly reach an amicable outcome.

Unfortunately, MUMA refused to sit down for a discussion. We had no choice but to file the cases into mediation. So unnecessary. I have forwarded other cases to other advocates as my representation has been politicised.

- d) Recently I was approached by several MUMA employees who wanted a union because of pay issues and bullying. I said I could initiate for a collective agreement as a strategy to have their concerns addressed in a wider forum. Several employees then joined the union. When I did initiate for bargaining, Willie issued me a trespass notice. MUMA also refused to accept the initiation notice. Neither of these actions are permissible under the Employment Relations Act 2000.
- e) Having a Labour member of parliament and former trade union leader act in this way is astonishing.