

Mr President

The recent judgement determined by the Employment Tribunal in favour of Dr Rosalind Ranson has made uncomfortable reading for many people and has regrettably not reflected well on the professionalism of our public service.

As you have said, Mr President, our legal advice is that this case remains *sub judice* as various matters still need to be determined and settled by the tribunal. I am therefore unable to discuss in any detail many aspects of the tribunal's findings at this stage.

Mr President,

The judgement from the Employment Tribunal was clear - and I quote:

*"this Decision is not an investigation into the way in which the Manx Government handled the Covid-19 pandemic. Neither is it concerned with the issue or merits of the vaccination programme."*

I agree and would respectfully suggest to Honourable Members that these specific issues will be dealt with by the independent review into the COVID pandemic. I can assure Hon Members that we are working hard to find a suitable Chair so that all pandemic actions can be brought to public attention as soon as possible.

However, this tribunal has raised a number of substantive questions regarding Government performance and culture and has understandably damaged confidence in Government. I stand today to acknowledge the deep discomfort that we feel with the evidence and findings of this tribunal, and I acknowledge our shortcomings.

In our Island Plan we set out the absolute need for a one Government approach, an approach that requires everyone across the public service to have certain considerations at the forefront of public service delivery. Our culture should be one of People First. We are determined to deliver the best quality of life for our people. This requires key principles to be embedded across all of Government. We have already clearly stated those as

- Listening – to continue to understand the changing needs of our people.
- Strategic thinking - to take account of long-term interests and aspirations of the Island.

- Stewardship – to take care of public funds and ensure value for money.
- Prioritisation – to effectively determine where Government resources are most needed.
- Productivity – to ensure resources are used effectively in the best interests of serving our people.
- Delivery – to provide a quality and efficient public service.
- Accountability – to recognise shortcomings, seek improvement and accept responsibility.

I have already made clear our commitments that Government departments, boards and offices will be required to develop clear action plans in fulfilment of their objectives, ensure cohesion on cross-Government working methods and policies and produce an annual report for Tynwald debate, scrutiny and approval, led by the Minister or Chairperson.

These plans will include specific actions and measures of performance. As part of our approach to reforming culture, capability and performance, it is vital that Hon Members in this court have the chance to hold Government to account and to determine whether productivity and performance is of the standard required.

That is what we have already committed to. But it is not enough. It is clear that we need to do more now and we need to do it faster to ensure that our vision becomes a reality.

Therefore I am today announcing a series of actions that will start a process of fundamental and wide ranging reform across the public sector.

In light of the early retirement of the Chief Secretary, I am taking the opportunity to reflect on its position, its roles and responsibilities. This is the moment to consider how the Chief Secretary enables and leads the highest standards of professionalism and performance across Government. We will also consider whether changes need to be made to ensure better accountability and delivery of Government plans and departmental performances. In assessing these matters there will need to be a determination on structural reform including single legal entity matters. I will update Tynwald in October on the role of the Chief Secretary and associated structural implications.

We will now undertake a review into the Office of Human Resources and its effectiveness. It is vital that Departments are being given full and proper advice in respect of the fair treatment of staff. I will announce how this will be undertaken by the end of this month.

It is clear that governance, performance and standards needs improvement. The Council of Ministers has already discussed the idea of Non-Executive Ministerial Advisers and indeed the DOI Minister has appointed such to assist and advise him. We will produce and release codes of governance for the appointment now of such Non Executives to Departmental Boards to provide more challenging levels of advice and scrutiny to Government performance. These will be laid before Tynwald in July.

Appointing such is at the discretion of the Minister but in appointing Non Executives I must be clear that policy will be decided by Council of Ministers and Political Members alone, with advice from officials. Board advisers will in place to give advice and support on the operational implications and effectiveness of policy proposals, focusing on getting policy translated into results. They will operate according to recognised precepts of good corporate governance in business: leadership, effectiveness, accountability and sustainability. Enhanced departmental Boards need to be able to challenge, advise on and supervise five main areas: strategic clarity, commercial sense, talented people, results focus, and management information.

Across the whole of Government, the code of conduct for public servants last updated in January 2017 will be reviewed and updated.

We will be accelerating the actions agreed by Tynwald in February 2021 on whistleblowing, including updates to the policies which have been drafted following internal consultation. Over the Summer, we will be consulting on proposed new legislation to strengthen our approach including enhancing protected disclosures, as well bringing forward revised and mandatory training for everyone on an ongoing basis.

It is clear to me that organisational culture needs to be refreshed and revitalised. Across parts of the organisation we are failing to properly engage and listen with our workforce. The Island Plan focuses on the principles of Government and People first, but it is silent on organisational values such as hard work, commitment and integrity. In focusing so much on delivery, we have perhaps forgotten that in order to do so we also need to build the best teams and create an employment

environment where hard work is acknowledged and rewarded, where people are listened to and where people are empowered to achieve. There is too much top down management and not enough bottom up problem solving or listening. We will set out today to renew, refresh and revitalise the Government organisational culture and performance through greater transparency, better communications and by insisting that solutions are delivered by proper engagement across the structure.

We will therefore, in conjunction with the review into HR, launch an employee engagement program over the summer to bring to the fore the core values of the organisation, determine how better organisational communications can take place, how productivity can be improved and we will publish by December the outcomes of this program and its future impact and actions.

We cannot successfully deliver without our staff and employees operating to the highest standards but in order to achieve that they themselves must be enabled to achieve and have trust in the organisation. We must do more to recognise success but we must also do more when they are recognised failings. In that vein The Council of Ministers will introduce by the end of this year an employee recognition program to enhance and promote good performance and culture. Vis a vis The Council of Ministers will also bring forward a protocol that will allow for either a part of a department or a whole department to be put into a special measures program where Council believes there is evidence of substantial failings.

Moving on, I can inform the court that the SAVE report commissioned by the Treasury in 2017 - 2019 will now receive a renewed and urgent attention. Government is too big and unwieldy. Operations in Government must now be annexed into the appropriate structures to bring about proper governance and transparency. The Council of Ministers, will bring forward proposals in October.

Mr President,

We need to make changes to Government. Structural changes, Cultural Changes and organisational changes because we cannot retain the status quo. And we need to do it now to ensure that the public are getting the best possible outcomes and delivery. I recognise of course that so many public servants do so much to deliver the very best in public service but there have been too many issues over too many years to feel comfortable. We must all now take

responsibility. Change will not happen overnight, but start and move with urgency. The Council of Ministers are determined to ensure that it does. Today, I am laying out foundations. There is more to come. Delivering will not be easy, but I know and believe that with effort and determination, the Government and its people can strive to become a more focused, professional and streamlined organisation.

ENDS

The Isle of Man Government Leadership Qualities have been designed as a framework to support positive personal development for all public service leaders.

[ summarise]

The framework builds on core qualities that help set out how we lead effectively across the Public Service.

These qualities are:

**Self-Awareness,**

**Challenge,**

**Strategic,**

**Trust** and

**Critical Thinking.**

When demonstrated, these qualities not only support, but also help drive our overarching Vision:

**'Working together for the Isle of Man'**

The Leadership Qualities have been designed with the IOMG Values in mind and help provide detailed examples of how our values translate into action.

We **value, trust** and **respect** one another

**Communication** is **open** and people are **listened to**

**Innovation** and **creativity** are encouraged.