



Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

As an independent Officer of Parliament, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has wide-ranging powers to investigate environmental concerns. 'Independent' means independent of the government of the day, so the the Commissioner reports not to a Government Minister but to Parliament through:

- the Speaker of the House
- the Officers of Parliament Committee.

The Commissioner is quite separate from the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). The Ministry is a government department and policy adviser, responsible to the Minister for the Environment.

As an Officer of Parliament, the Commissioner's job is to hold the Government to account for its environmental policies and actions. The Commissioner is a policy reviewer standing outside the system of environmental management and reporting on it.

The office was set up under the Environment Act 1986, and the Commissioner is appointed for a five-year term. In 2010 Parliament voted \$2.667 million to fund the office.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment is one of three Officers of Parliament. The other two are the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General and the Office of the Ombudsmen.

The current Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment is Dr Jan Wright.

Some examples of the Commissioner's reports are:

- Water quality in New Zealand
- Benefits of Smart Electricity Meters
- Evaluation of use of 1080 for pest control
- Value of NZ's conservation estate
- Evaluation of practice of fracking.

For further information go to <http://www.pce.parliament.nz/publications>