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## **Media Release**

### **EDS welcomes appointment of new Secretary for the Environment**

EDS has welcomed the appointment of Vicky Robertson as Chief Executive of the Ministry for the Environment.

"We look forward to working with Ms Robertson in her new post. We note that she comes from a very senior position at the Treasury, an entity with an analogous role to that of MFE and a strong reputation as a state sector organisation. That experience should stand her in good stead.

"We consider that there's a need for a culture change at the Ministry. In recent years, in our opinion, it has become somewhat inward looking, defensive and very beltway focused. This has led to diminished confidence amongst some key stakeholders.

"EDS would like to see the Ministry become more outward looking and develop an energetic, front-footed and positive stance towards external engagement.

"As a key environmental think tank, EDS is keen to work more closely with the Ministry, aligning our work with evolving government policy, so we can generate timely and contestable thinking on key issues.

"So Ms Robertson's appointment offers an opportunity to refresh our own relationship with the Ministry as well as an opportunity to build a reinvigorated kaupapa – and we expect some other entities will be feeling the same.

"Ms Robertson should also give serious thought to the presence of the Ministry outside of Wellington. It is after all a very small part of New Zealand. The relationship with Auckland in particular needs a pretty fundamental makeover.

"She is a lawyer and so will understand the importance of ensuring that new policy instruments promulgated by her Minister need to be clear and unambiguous, unlike the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2014, which is due for review shortly.

"We note that Ms Robertson is a former New Zealand representative hockey player. That experience in what is a highly combative sport should stand her in good stead as she develops professional working relationships with Ministers," Mr Taylor concluded.