



CABINET OFFICE

18 September 2024

[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA OIA-2024/25-0175

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Official Information Act request: Hon McKee conflict of interest**

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 21 August 2024. You requested:

*“Could you please provide me with the following information:*

- 1) What date was Hon McKee's interest in Firearms Safety Specialists New Zealand Limited first disclosed to the Cabinet Office? What did Hon McKee reveal about this interest and the state of the company? Her press secretary stated that the company "remains registered, but non-trading". Is this correct, based on the information provided to the Cabinet Office? Were any management strategies put in place for this conflict?*
- 2) Did Hon McKee declare to the Cabinet Office any other interests related to her previous work as a gun lobbyist, such as her membership of COLFO and her involvement with the Fair and Reasonable Campaign? Were any management strategies put in place for these conflicts?”*

### **Information to be withheld**

The Cabinet Office holds information relevant to your request, some of which I have decided to withhold.

Ministers are responsible for identifying and reviewing possible conflicts of interest and ensuring they are addressed promptly. The Cabinet Office, on behalf of the Prime Minister, supports Ministers in identifying and managing conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to their portfolios or other ministerial responsibilities.

Successive Ombudsmen have long held the view that Cabinet Office advice to Ministers is inherently confidential. It is in the public interest that the Cabinet Office can obtain and assess information about conflicts of interest and provide advice to Ministers on how to resolve them. Ministers are encouraged to seek advice from the Secretary of the Cabinet on a confidential basis. Details regarding conflicts of interest are not generally disclosed, in order to ensure the confidentiality of Cabinet proceedings, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs and in some cases to protect personal privacy.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

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However, in relation to question 1, I can advise that the Cabinet Office met with Hon McKee following her appointment as a Minister in 2023 to discuss her possible conflicts of interest. At our initial meetings with Ministers about conflicts of interests, the Cabinet Office always brings the Minister's entry in the MPs' pecuniary interests register along to discuss with the Minister. (The only exception would be if a new Minister were also new to Parliament, and did not have an existing entry in that register.) Hon McKee's MP pecuniary interests register for 2023 records her directorship/controlling interest in Firearms Safety Specialists New Zealand Limited. She has publicly stated the company is not trading.

In relation to the remainder of question 1, and question 2, I am withholding details of this information and the management plan put in place under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where making the information available would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied;
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers or officials in the course of their duty.

In making my decision, in accordance with section 9(1) of the Act I have considered whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to withhold the information, and I have concluded that it does not.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Nāku noa, nā



Rachel Hayward  
**Secretary of Cabinet**