



CABINET OFFICE

7 November 2024

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA OIA-2024/25-0319

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request:[REDACTED] Hon Shane Jones conflict of interest

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 7 October 2024. You requested:

“Can I get all information relating to Minister Shane Jones conflicts of interest.”

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. It therefore holds information referred to in your request.

Details regarding conflicts of interest disclosed to the Cabinet Office are not generally released, 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. This has been the approach taken by successive administrations over many years because 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 on a confidential basis.

However, I have decided to provide you with some publicly available information regarding the management of Hon Jones’ conflicts of interest, which is set out below.

Following his appointment as a Minister, Hon Jones met with the Cabinet Office for a confidential discussion about conflicts of interest. The Cabinet Office subsequently drew up a register of his interests and recommended management actions, where any were required, in accordance with paragraph 2.76 of the Cabinet Manual. The Prime Minister agreed with the proposed management plan. This was part of a process conducted for all Ministers and Parliamentary Under-Secretaries following their appointment. The register and management actions are updated from time to time. Further detail about Cabinet Office processes for managing Ministers’ interests is available here: [Ministers' interests management | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#).

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DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

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One of Hon Jones' management actions is an agreement that he will not receive papers or participate in certain decisions relating to local government representation (Māori wards) because of a potential personal conflict of interest. Further detail about this and about advice sought by Hon Jones about a potential conflict in relation to Trans-Tasman Resources is available here:

<https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-08/dPMC-roia-oia-2023-24-0970.pdf>.

Hon Jones also identified potential personal and pecuniary conflicts of interest in relation to some projects that were being considered for inclusion in the Fast Track Approvals Bill. As Minister of Regional Development, Hon Jones had Ministerial responsibilities delegated to him in relation to decisions on which mining, quarrying and aquaculture and farming projects to include in the schedule to the Bill. With the agreement of the Prime Minister, he transferred responsibility for decision-making in relation to the specific projects he had identified as having a potential conflict to Hon Tama Potaka. The relevant projects were identified in a statement by Hon Chris Bishop on 11 October 2024: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-releases-more-fast-track-detail>.

As for other Ministers with decision-making responsibilities, the arrangements for the transfer for Hon Jones were that Hon Jones would not take part in decisions about whether to include the conflicted projects in the Bill. Officials would report directly to Hon Potaka on matters connected to the decision, and any information relating to the conflicted project inclusion decision would be referred to Hon Potaka. Hon Jones would not receive relevant parts of Cabinet papers or official papers or reports relating to the conflicted projects from the time the conflict was identified. Where a conflicted project was discussed at Cabinet committee or Cabinet meetings, Hon Jones would declare his interest and withdraw from that part of the relevant meeting.

There is additional information covered by your request that I have decided to withhold. The Cabinet Office holds other information about Hon Shane Jones' declarations of interest, and our advice to him on those interests. The grounds for withholding this information under the Act are:

1. section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
2. section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence in order to prevent prejudice to the supply of information in the future
3. section 9(2)(f)(ii), to maintain collective and individual ministerial responsibility
4. section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
5. section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

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 the Cabinet