



CABINET OFFICE

24 March 2025



Ref: OIA OIA-2024/25-0673

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Official Information Act request: Conflicts of interest within the ministerial portfolios

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 18 February 2025. You requested:

“Under the Official Information Act, I request all written communications, including advice, briefings, and reports, regarding any and all conflicts of interest within ministerial portfolios.”

The time frame for responding to your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 5 working days because it necessitated consultations to be undertaken before a decision could be made on the request. Following this extension, I am now in a position to respond.

Information publicly available

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.

However some information about Ministers’ interests is proactively released on our website and is available here: www.dPMC.govt.nz/our-business-units/cabinet-office/ministers-and-their-portfolios/ministers-interests. Our website also has other information about how conflicts of interest are identified, managed and made public (including why only some information about conflicts is released).

In addition, the following information is publicly available:

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DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

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1. Further information about the management of interests in relation to Hon Shane Jones is publicly available here: www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-08/dpmc-roia-oia-2023-24-0970.pdf.
2. The arrangements for managing conflicts of interest for the Fast-track Approvals Bill were set out here: www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-releases-more-fast-track-detail.

Additional information to be proactively released

In addition, some further information will soon be publicly available on our website as part of our regular proactive release of information about Ministers' interests. I have therefore withheld this information in accordance with section 18(d) of the Act.

Additional information released to you

I have decided to provide you with some further information which will be made publicly available on our website in the future but which will not be part of the proactive release noted above:

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Matter at issue</i>	<i>Nature of conflict</i>	<i>Action taken</i>
Hon Collins	Potential conflict between ministerial responsibilities as Minister for the Public Service for decisions to grant exceptions to the Cabinet Fees Framework for panel conveners, panel members and chairs appointed under the Fast-track Approvals Act and a personal interest.	Personal	Responsibilities as Minister for the Public Service for decisions to grant exceptions to the Cabinet Fees Framework for panel conveners, panel members and chairs appointed under the Fast-track Approvals Act transferred to Hon Goldsmith on 30 January 2025. Actions (1), (2), (3) and (4) put in place.
Hon Grigg	Potential conflict between responsibilities as Associate Minister for ACC, and as the MP for the Selwyn electorate.	Constituency	Responsibilities as Associate Minister for ACC for decisions relating to Selwyn electorate constituents transferred to Hon Bayly on 12 February 2025. Actions (1) and (2) put in place.*

Minister	Matter at issue	Nature of conflict	Action taken
Hon Bishop	Potential conflict as Minister of Transport between Ministerial decisions regarding Wellington International Airport Ltd and a personal interest.	Personal	Responsibilities as Minister of Transport for matters relating to aviation transferred to Hon Meager on 12 February 2025. Actions (1), (2), (3) and (4) put in place.*
Hon Willis	Potential conflict between responsibilities as Minister of Finance for certain matters relating to the oil and gas sector and a personal interest.	Personal	Responsibilities as Minister of Finance for matters relating to certain matters relating to the oil and gas sector transferred to Hon Bishop on 14 February 2025. + Actions (1), (2), (3) and (4) put in place.*

* The actions are:

- (1) officials will report directly to the Acting Minister (recipient of the transfer) on matters connected to the conflicted project inclusion decision;
- (2) any information relating to the conflicted project inclusion decision will be referred to the Acting Minister;
- (3) the Minister with the conflict of interest will not take part in the conflicted project inclusion decision and will not receive relevant parts of Cabinet papers or official papers or reports relating to that conflicted project inclusion decision; and
- (4) when a conflicted project inclusion decision is discussed at Cabinet committee or Cabinet meetings, the relevant Minister will declare their interest and withdraw from that part of the relevant meeting.

+ Arrangements were put in place by the Minister's office prior to the transfer date to ensure Hon Willis did not participate in decision-making in relation to this matter before the formal transfer.

Information withheld

The Cabinet Office holds other information about Ministers' conflicts of interest within Ministerial portfolios which I have decided to withhold for the reasons set out earlier. 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