



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

4 October 2019

John Luke
fyi-request-11185-ed5886d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Reference: OIA-2019/20-0135

Dear John Luke

Official Information Act request: Agenda Item for August's Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee Meetings

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 10 September 2019. You requested:

*"...I would like to request the agenda items for all August's (APH) Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee meetings.
Also, has the APH finished their discussion on 2020 New Year's honours list?..."*

Agenda items for Cabinet Appointment and Honours Committee meetings in August

The Appointment and Honours Committee (APH) meets weekly during sitting weeks to consider public appointments including appointments to statutory and other government agencies. The Committee meets for a separate round of meetings to consider nominations for New Zealand Royal Honours, and for which different documentation is produced.

The Cabinet Office has maintained a long-held view that the release of agendas would risk undermining the conventions of collective responsibility and confidentiality of Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings. The agendas are an essential and practical tool for these meetings that assist collective discussion. For that reason, I am withholding the requested agendas from APH under s 9(2)(f)(ii) of the Act to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect collective ministerial responsibility.

Discussions on New Year 2020 Honours list

The New Year 2020 Honours list will be announced on 31 December 2019. I am withholding the information that you have requested regarding the discussions of APH on the list, and any relevant agendas, in full under s 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act, to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence and to make it available would be likely to otherwise damage the public interest.

As noted in responses to your previous OIA requests on these meetings, former Chief Ombudsman have found that although there is a public interest in the disclosure of information about the Royal Honours system, there is a greater public interest in maintaining the long-standing convention of confidentiality in relation to processes associated with Royal Honours, which is essential to the integrity and continuation of the Royal Honours system.

The release of information about an Honours list that has not yet been announced would compromise the ability to uphold the convention of confidentiality at least for the duration of the list's production.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Webster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council