



CABINET OFFICE

16 October 2019

Harry Robson
fyi-request-11254-04e6a2af@requests.fyi.org.nz

Reference: OIA-2019/20-0157

Dear Mr Robson

Official Information Act request: Meetings PM and Cabinet Have Held with Theistic Organisations Since Oct 2017

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 18 September 2019. You requested:

"...(1) How many meetings have the PM and Cabinet had with theistic leaders and theistic organisations since October 2017?

(A) which leaders and organisations have been met with?

how many times were said leaders and organisations met with?

(B) How long were these said meetings?

(C) What was discussed during said meetings?

(D) Did said meetings impact on any governmental action (including policy and legislation)?

(2) Has the PM or members of Cabinet ever met with the "The Family and the International Foundation" (USA) or communicated with them, in any capacity (including indirectly)?

(A) How long were these said meetings? Who was involved in and with them?

(B) What was discussed during said meetings?

(3) Does the PM or Cabinet have any protocols regarding the separation of church and state?.. "

On 24 September 2019, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet transferred parts one and two of the request to all Cabinet Ministers under section 14(b)(i) of the Act.

In response to part three of your request, New Zealand's constitution does not recognise an established state religion or church. This means that there are no explicit protocols regarding the separation of church and state in the Cabinet Manual, which is the authoritative guide to New Zealand's system of central government decision-making. A copy of the Cabinet Manual can be found online here: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2017-06/cabinet-manual-2017.pdf>

The Manual does contain important guidance for Ministers on managing conflicts of interest (see chapter 2, paragraphs 2.53 to 2.83). This includes any conflicts that may arise with people close to a Minister, such as a Minister's family, whānau, or close associates. There is also guidance for Ministers to take care in their associations with non-governmental

organisations or community groups that may have objectives that conflict with government policy, are a lobby group, or receives or applies for government funding (paragraphs 2.68 to 2.71).

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

Yours sincerely



Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet