

22 June 2021

Grace Haden

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Tēnā koe Ms Haden

**OIA request re Government Legal Network**  
**Our Ref: OIA353/1**

1. Thank you for your Official Information Act (**OIA**) request.

***The Government Legal Network***

2. The Government Legal Network (**GLN**) was formed in 2011. It is a collaborative initiative of the Solicitor-General and departmental Chief Legal Advisors (**CLAs**), on behalf of their chief executives, that leverages the collective legal resources and expertise of the Crown to support the government in the lawful delivery of services to New Zealanders.
3. GLN membership encompasses all lawyers employed by Public Service departments, plus the NZ Police, NZ Defence Force and the Parliamentary Counsel Office. Crown Entity lawyers participate in some GLN activities, to the extent that privilege and conflict considerations permit.
4. Over time, the GLN has matured to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and delivery of legal services to the Crown. In 2013, Cabinet endorsed an enhanced approach to the GLN governance and functions. This is reflected in the **enclosed** Cabinet Paper (CAB (13) 353) and Minute of Decision (CAB Min (13) 21/5). I have also **enclosed** a 2015 Cabinet Paper (SEC (15) 22) and Minute of Decision (CAB Min (15) 8/2).
5. Limited information has been withheld from the 2015 Cabinet Paper on the basis that it is necessary to maintain legal professional privilege (section 9(2)(h) of the OIA). I do not consider that the public interest in maintaining privilege is outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available.

### ***The GLN Governance Board***

6. The GLN Governance Board (**the Board**) is responsible for the governance of the GLN and its activities and ensuring that the GLN is effectively leveraging the collective potential of that network. The Board is made up of:
- 6.1 The Crown Law Leadership Team as members ex officio;
  - 6.2 Four departmental CLA representatives; and
  - 6.3 One central agency representative.
7. The current members of the Board are:

Brendan Booth	Chief Legal Advisor, Ministry of Transport (Chair)
Una Jagose QC	Solicitor General, Crown Law
Katie Elkin	Deputy Chief Executive System Leadership, Crown Law
Sophie Mexsom	Deputy Chief Executive Strategy and Corporate, Crown Law
Aaron Martin	Deputy Solicitor General Crown Legal Risk, Crown Law
Virginia Hardy	Deputy Solicitor General Attorney-General's Group, Crown Law
Madeline Laracy	Deputy Solicitor General Criminal, Crown Law
Anthea Williams	Treasury Solicitor, The Treasury
David Soper	Chief Legal Advisor, New Zealand Customs Service
Leishia Pettigrew	Chief Legal Advisor, Department of Corrections
Tania Warburton	Policy Advisor, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

### ***The System Leadership Group***

8. The System Leadership Group (**SLG**) is one of five groups within Crown Law. Established in November 2019, it supports the Solicitor-General's leadership of government legal services.

### ***GLN Online***

9. GLN Online is one of the mechanisms in place to help members of the GLN stay connected and informed. Access to GLN Online is by invitation only. The invitation is extended to lawyers who are entitled to GLN membership (see para 3). Different categories of GLN members have different access permissions. For example, some parts of GLN Online are accessible only to Public Service Department Chief Legal Advisors, whereas other parts are accessible to all GLN members. Non-lawyer staff within Crown Law who support the System Leadership Group and/or the GLN also have access, depending on business need.

10. GLN Online contains a range of information of relevance to government lawyers. This includes a directory containing details of government lawyers and their areas of practice, advertisements for public sector jobs and secondments, upcoming professional development opportunities, and legal resources that are of general relevance across the Crown. Articles of interest cover a range of different materials, including, for example, links to guides produced by the Ombudsman.
11. Information is primarily uploaded onto GLN Online by the SLG. When material is uploaded a considered decision is made about who should be able to access the information. Decisions are made in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020. Generally, the information uploaded does not contain any personal information that is not already in the public domain (other than the Lawyers' Directory, on which details are entered by individuals themselves).
12. There is no specific policy for how to make a Privacy Act request to obtain material held on GLN Online. Privacy Act requests for personal information on GLN Online can be made through contacting [OIA@crownlaw.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@crownlaw.govt.nz). As noted above, however, documents uploaded onto GLN Online do not tend to include personal information about identifiable individuals that is not already in the public domain.
13. I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I encourage you to raise them with Crown Law.
14. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or free phone 0800 802 602.

#### **Possibility of publication of Crown Law's response**

15. Please note this response letter will be considered for publication on Crown Law's website. If it is determined as falling within relevant criteria, the letter and accompanying enclosures will be published, but with your personal details redacted.

Nāku noa, nā



**Crown Law**  
Dr Katie Elkin  
Deputy Chief Executive, System Leadership

Encl  
Cabinet Summary Paper (CAB (13) 353), Cabinet Paper and Minute of Decision (CAB Min (13) 21/5).  
Cabinet Summary Paper (SEC (15) 22), Cabinet Paper and Minute of Decision (CAB Min (15) 8/2).