



20 September 2023

By email: fyi-request-23768-c3647e7e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Attention: Cameron Slater

Tēnā koe Mr Slater,

Request for official information about the cost of political donation prosecutions
Our Ref: OIA353/1

1. I refer to your request to the Serious Fraud Office (**the SFO**) dated 10 August 2023 (submitted through the FYI website) for the following official information in relation to the prosecution of individuals in connection with donations made to the Labour, National and NZ First parties:
 - (a) The total cost of the prosecutions.
 - (b) To identify the “outside (non SFO) consultants, accounting experts and lawyers” engaged in each of the prosecutions, with costs to be itemised.
 - (c) Any documents showing why the SFO required the engagement of outside expertise/consultants rather than use their own in-house expertise.
2. In a letter dated 7 September 2023, the SFO informed you of the total costs incurred by that Office to investigate and prosecute each case and to engage lawyers (Panel counsel). They also informed you no consultants or external accountants were engaged and explained why they engaged Panel counsel.
3. As the SFO advised in a letter of 23 August 2023, part of your request was transferred to this Office. That is because, when the defendants pleaded and the cases became Crown prosecutions, this Office assumed responsibility for the costs of SFO Panel counsel engaged in the prosecutions from that point onwards.
4. Details of payments made to Panel counsel once this matter became a Crown prosecution are set out in **Table 1** below. Note that, as the Labour and National Party prosecutions were joined by the Court in November 2021, it was not

possible to separate the costs as they relate to those two political parties. They are therefore grouped.

Table 1

Item	Invoice amount excl GST
Labour/National	\$317,839.93
Katie Hogan	\$88,375.00
John Dixon KC	\$111,704.24
Stephen Bonnar KC	\$4,950.00
Paul Wicks KC	\$112,810.69
NZ First	\$263,110.94
James Carruthers	\$90,977.04
John Dixon KC	\$105,447.50
Stephen Bonnar KC	\$1,683.00
Paul Wicks KC	\$65,003.40
Grand Total	\$580,950.87

5. There were appeals conducted in relation to these prosecutions.
6. The external lawyers engaged by this Office to appear on appeals were Paul Wicks KC and Katie Hogan. The total cost incurred by this Office in relation to them was \$25,747.
7. A total of 161 hours has been recorded by Crown Law counsel on the appeal files. Crown Law staff are salaried workers and do not present invoices for their work. As a result, we cannot provide the cost of this time. Non-legal staff at Crown Law do not record time, so there is no data associated with any non-legal activity on the files. The recorded Crown Law time includes the time of counsel who appeared on the appeals (Stuart Baker and Rebecca Thomson) and also other counsel who were not directly engaged but performed review and oversight functions.
8. Note that appeal files in relation to the National and New Zealand First Party prosecutions are still active. The costs and time accrued by this Office in relation to those files are as at 15 September 2023.
9. Please note that we may publish this response (with your personal details redacted), and any related documents, on Crown Law's website if we decide proactive release of this information is or may be in the public interest. If you have any concerns about this, please let us know within 10 working days of the date of this letter.

10. If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact OIA@crownlaw.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā
Crown Law



Zannah Johnston
Crown Counsel & Team Manager (Acting)