

Hon Grant Robertson

MP for Wellington Central

Minister of Finance

Minister for Sport and Recreation

Minister for Cyclone Recovery

Leader of the House



4 October 2023

Harris Lee

fyi-request-24036-6a28c365@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Harris

Thank you for your Official Information Act (OIA) request, received on 5 September 2023. You requested:

...information from you relating to your role as the Minister responsible for the RBNZ under the RBNZ Act 2001.

Can you please provide any information held on the requirement for political neutrality for the RBNZ Chair.

In particular I am interested in any correspondence you have had with Chair or the Governor on this matter or any advice you have received from the Public Service Commission or Commissioner or the Treasury on this matter.

For context, I refer you to reporting that shows the Chair of the RBNZ was actively working with the National Party to promote its election chances <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/497281/university-of-waikato-boss-referred-to-new-medical-school-as-a-present-for-future-national-government>

Specifically I refer you to the statement: "The first student intake would be 2027 - a present to you to start your second term in government!" as the Chair of the RBNZ wrote in a March 2023 email to National Party MP Shane Reti.

Every year I send a letter of expectations to the RBNZ. It is important that board members, including the Chair, work in line with the Letter of Expectations to the Reserve Bank. I am confident Professor Quigley and the Board are aware of that.

A copy of the Letter of Expectations is available on the Reserve Bank's website: <https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/-/media/project/sites/rbnz/files/publications/letters-of-expectation/letter-of-expectations-2023-2024.pdf>.

I hold no information on the requirement for political neutrality for the RBNZ chair. I have not corresponded with the Chair or Governor on the requirement for the political neutrality of the RBNZ Chair. I have not received any advice from the Treasury or PSC on this matter.

Therefore, I am refusing your request in full under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

This reply addresses the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Robertson', written in a cursive style.

Hon Grant Robertson
Minister of Finance