



21 February 2024

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A Collins  
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Dear A Collins

**Official Information Act request (OIA 2324-0566)**

Thank you for your request for information dated 7 February 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department). You requested the following information:

*Under the Official Information Act 1982, I request a copy of all information held by Ministerial and Secretariat Services in relation to conflicts of interest for permanent, temporary and contracted staff employed or contracted to work in ministerial offices since 20 November 2023.*

*I would like information about specific conflicts advised by these staff to Ministerial Services, the dates the department was advised, and the steps taken to manage these conflicts.*

**Response to your request**

All staff employed by the Department are required to abide by a code of conduct, and to actively manage any perceived or actual conflicts of interest that exist prior to their employment, or arise during their employment.

Once staff have commenced employment, they are expected to declare any conflicts of interest as soon as they arise. The Department has a process where conflicts of interest are discussed and reviewed on a regular basis. This process must meet the Public Service Commissioner's conflicts of interest model standards which can be found here<sup>1</sup>.

It's important to note that it's not unusual for friends and family, to work within the same workplace and there are practices in place to manage this, as mentioned above.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/guidance/guide-he-aratohu/model-standards/conflicts-of-interest/>

Conflicts of interest forms and their completion are part of an employee's personal file. The Department as the employer has an obligation to hold details relating to their employment files as confidential to protect their privacy.

The Department considers that grounds for withholding further information requested by you exist under the following sections of Official Information Act:

- 9(2)(a) protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons; and
- 9(2)(ba) protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence and where the making available of the information –
  - (i) would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied; and
  - (ii) would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest.

I have considered whether the above grounds for withholding the information under section 9 of the Act are outweighed by other considerations which would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available. In this instance, I do not consider that to be the case.

We may publish this OIA response on [www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz) (with your personal details having been removed). Publishing responses to OIA requests increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the purpose of the Act to enable effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies, and to promote the accountability of Ministers and officials.

If you have any concerns with the information in this response, you have a right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. Information on how to do this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



**Briget Ridden**  
General Manager – Ministerial Services  
Te Haumi – Enterprise Partnerships  
Te Tari Taiwhenua – The Department of Internal Affairs