

11 December 2024

Pat Biss

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Tēnā koe Pat

I write in response to your request dated 20 November 2024, for information under the Official Information Act (1982) relating to the Dixon Street apartment complex. Specifically, you requested the following:

- 1. All information regarding the future of the Dixon Street Flats in Wellington, including proposals and cost benefit analyses.*
- 2. All external and internal communications with Kāinga Ora staff or their representatives regarding the removal of tenants from the last two years. Happy for personal information to not be included.*
- 3. All information regarding the building's earthquake safety, and options and cost of improving earthquake related safety issues.*

The following summary provides background information about the Dixon Street apartment building, which we believe will be of use to you:

The 11-storey, 117 unit building in Wellington's CBD was designed by the Housing Construction Department of the Ministry of Works under government architect Gordon Wilson in 1940. It is listed as a Category 1 Historic Place on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero maintained by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT), reflecting its historic significance. The building has also been scheduled as a heritage building in the Wellington City District Plan since 1994.

A Detailed Seismic Assessment was completed in October 2020 which determined the building has a strength of 40 percent New Building Standard (NBS). This is above the legal threshold for being considered "earthquake prone" (less than 34 percent NBS) but remains an earthquake risk. Kāinga Ora's policy seeks, where practical, to achieve 67 percent NBS. This is to reduce the risk to occupants and assets from earthquakes.

Kāinga Ora has been looking at options for the future of this building since 2021, as many components of the building (including the building services and roof) are reaching the end of their useful life and require replacement. Additionally, the units do not meet current standards of living, including Healthy Homes standards and acoustic performance.

All the customers who were living in the Dixon Street complex have now been moved into other Kāinga Ora homes and the building is being secured while decisions are made on its future. Broadly speaking, the main options under consideration are to remediate the building in its current typology to meet current standards, either with or without structural strengthening, or seeking to divest the building. The property is subject to a Right of First Refusal, with Port Nicholson Block

Settlement Trust (PNBST) the mandated iwi authority that manages the Treaty Settlement on behalf of their broader beneficiaries of Taranaki Whānui.

### **Responses to your questions**

Parts one, two and three of your request are being refused under section 18(f) of the Act, *'the information cannot be made available without substantial collation and research'*.

Our preliminary scoping of these parts of your request indicated a large volume of documents and emails. We considered attempting to identify and provide key documents or emails in scope of your request or alternatively restricting the timeframe of our searches; however, this has proved impractical given the volume of information potentially in scope. As required by section 18(A) of the Act, consideration was given to fixing a charge and further extending the timeframe, but we have determined that neither option would assist in making the information available to you.

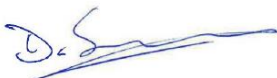
With respect to part one and three, Kāinga Ora is still considering its options for the site, one of which being divestment. Therefore, documents containing information pertaining to the property's estimated cost for refurbishment, including information relating to the cost of improving earthquake related safety issues is also withheld under section 9(2)(j) of the Act, to enable Kāinga Ora: *"to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations."* Additionally, Kāinga Ora is still considering and consulting on its preferred options for 134 Dixon Street, and final decisions have not been made. As the future of the building is under active consideration, Kāinga Ora is withholding for the time being documents which discuss preferred options under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, *'to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.'*

I have considered the public interest pursuant to section 9(1) of the Act. I do not consider the withholding of the information from this response is outweighed by public interest considerations in making that information available.

It should be noted, that in the event that the organisation does proceed with a sale on the open market, we will provide potential purchasers with information about the building, including all information required by law.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. There is Information about how to make a complaint at <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz> or by freephone on [0800 802 602](tel:0800802602).

Nāku iti noa, nā



Daniel Soughtton  
**Deputy Chief Executive – Central**