



21 February 2025

Kieran Pegler

fyi-request-29541-309fc588@requests.fyi.org.nz

DOIA-REQ-0007890

Tēnā koe Kieran

Thank you for your correspondence to Hon Chris Penk, Associate Minister of Immigration, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following:

- 1) *All advice to you from Immigration New Zealand (INZ) on Candace Owens;*
- 2) *All information received by you or INZ about Candace Owens from those representing or assisting her with her request for a special direction that she be granted a visa;*
- 3) *All information provided to INZ or you from Candace Owens or her representatives;*
- 4) *All information about Candace Owens received by you or INZ from other NZ government departments;*
- 5) *All information about Candace Owens you or INZ received from 3rd parties outside government.*

Under section 16 of the OIA my preference is to receive the whole of any document which contains information within the scope of this request. Under the same section my preference is to receive the information in a text-searchable format.

Under section 19(a)(ii) I further request that if you decide to withhold any information, you also provide an explanation of the grounds in support of your reason(s) for withholding, and the public interest factors favouring disclosure that you considered.

On 19 December 2024, parts 2, 3, 4 and 5 were transferred to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act, as it relates to information held by Immigration New Zealand.

On 10 February 2025 we advised that MBIE has decided to extend the period of time available to make a decision on your request under section 15A(1)(b) of the Act, as consultations necessary to make a decision on your request are such that a proper response to the request cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit.

Our Response

Please find attached information within scope of your request in the attached appendix.

Please note some information has been withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 6(b)(i), as the making available of that information would be likely to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government.
- 6(c), as the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial.
- 9(2)(a), as the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons. I do not consider that the withholding of this information is outweighed by public interest considerations in making the information available.
- 9(2)(g)(ii), as the withholding of the information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such Ministers, members or organisations, officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment.

Immigration New Zealand declined Ms Owens' visa application on the basis of section 15(1)(f) of the Immigration Act 2009 following Ms Owens being denied entry to Australia.

You may be aware that subsequently, Ms Owens requested intervention from the Associate Minister of Immigration, Hon Chris Penk, to exercise his discretion and grant her a visa. The Minister granted Ms Owens a visa following this request, after considering representations made to him.

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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact inzoias@mbie.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Jeannie Melville
Deputy Chief Operating Officer Immigration
Chief Operating Officer Immigration
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment