

2 May 2017

Mary Hutchinson
fyi-request-5641-905fc3be@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mary Hutchinson

I refer to your email of 30 March 2017 requesting the information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) relating to the Suzanne Aubert crèche at Pukeahu summarised as:

Concern that an important Catholic historical building should be given to and named after the nominal head of the Church of England and asking for an explanation as to how this came to occur and whether there was public consultation about this decision?

The Queen Elizabeth II Pukeahu Education Centre was selected by the Government as New Zealand's official gift to the Queen of New Zealand on the occasion of her 90th birthday. This gift was chosen because the Education Centre can be used by all the people of New Zealand, and it will make a positive and lasting contribution to education and civic participation.

As the building is now owned by the Crown the 'gift' to the Queen is in effect a naming gift rather than the transfer of ownership and certainly no constraint on access.

The Sisters of Compassion have been consulted about the re-use of the building as an Education Centre and have welcomed that development. At present the Sisters are focussing their commemoration of Mother Aubert at their Island Bay home. They are very pleased the Centre includes a display about Suzanne Aubert and the Sisters of Compassion.

There was no public consultation before the Government decided to make the education centre the official gift because a formal gift of this nature must remain confidential until the date of announcement.

Regarding the appropriateness of the gift, Her Majesty is Queen of New Zealand in an entirely separate capacity to her position as Queen of the United Kingdom. Similarly, while the Queen is Head of the Church of England, she is not Head of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. Her Majesty has no formal religious role in New Zealand. The gift of the Education Centre was to the Queen of New Zealand, not the Head of the Church of England.

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.

Yours sincerely



Brodie Stubbs
Manager, Heritage Projects