



## Office of Hon Bill English

Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister of Finance  
MP for Clutha-Southland

**- 8 AUG 2013**

Liam Williams

By Email: [fyi-request-992-eeae35c1@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-992-eeae35c1@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Liam Williams

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received on 11 July 2013. You requested the following (verbatim):

*I wish to test assertion often made in opposition to the Lobbying Disclosure Bill; specifically, that a register of lobbyists is superfluous to the information already freely available under the Official Information Act 1982.*

*In accordance with my objective, I would like to request all information held (including the Minister diary) in relation to:*

*All instances between 1–31 May 2013 where the Minister met or otherwise conversed with parties who engaged in lobbying activity.*

*For the purpose of this request, "lobbying activity" should be considered to mean:*

*Communication between the Minister and any party (the lobbyist) who is paid to represent the views of any person, company, firm or organisation (the client), where:*

*The principal purpose of the communication was to convey the client party's view on the state or development of:*

*any legislative proposal, Bill, Act, regulation, amendment, policy, programme, or the awarding of grants, funding, contracts, or any other financial benefit which falls under the auspices of the Government of New Zealand to allocate.*

*For each instance of "lobbying activity", I would like to know:*

- The name and business address of the lobbyist*
- The name and business address of the represented client*
- The subject matter(s) discussed*
- The name and business address of the client and any person or body that controls or directs the activities of the client and has a direct interest in the outcome of the activities undertaken on behalf of the client*
- Where the client is a company, the name and business address of each subsidiary of the company that has a direct interest in the outcome of the activities undertaken on behalf of the client*
- Where the client is a company that is a subsidiary of another company, the name and business address of that other company*
- Where the client is a coalition, the name and address of each person or body that is a member of that coalition*

*-Particulars to identify the subject-matter in respect of which the lobbying activity was undertaken*

*-Particulars to identify the communication technique used to communicate with a public office holder (e.g.: telephone conversation, internet conference etc.)*

*I appreciate that this is a significant request, involving multiple parties, events and resources. I would be grateful for efforts made to provide the requested information. Please contact me if you have any queries.*

Firstly, I would like to note that I attend engagements as a Minister of the Crown. I also attend engagements in my capacity as Deputy Prime Minister, a Member of Parliament, a member of the National Party, or in my private capacity. Information about engagements undertaken in my capacity as a Minister of the Crown is defined as "official information". However, information on other engagements is not "official information" and therefore is not subject to the Official Information Act.

In order to provide the information that you have requested, all engagements listed in my official diary for May 2013 would need to be researched to establish if they were undertaken in my capacity as a Minister of the Crown. Once these engagements had been identified as official information, an assessment would need to be made as to whether they involved any meeting or conversation with parties engaged in lobbying activity. This would require being able to identify lobbyists and any client they were representing, which may not be possible.

Given the number of engagements in my diary, to provide you with the information that you have requested would require substantial diversion of resources and would be an onerous exercise for officials to undertake. For this reason, I am declining your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act:

- the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

In making my decision, I considered the factors contained in sections 18A and 18B of the Official Information Act. However, I do not consider that the actions suggested by sections 18A and 18B would enable me to answer your request.


Additionally, even if engagements involving lobbyists could be identified, it is unlikely that I would hold all of the information you request, such as names and addresses of lobbyists, clients, and subsidiaries.

As further explanation, my diary is a forward-looking planning and management tool. It is not a record of meetings and does not necessarily list all individuals at a particular meeting, or what was discussed.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision.

Should you wish to specify an issue or area of interest with greater particularity, I am prepared to consider a further request from you.

Yours sincerely



Hon Bill English  
**Minister of Finance**