



CABINET OFFICE

16 May 2025



Ref: OIA OIA-2024/25-0832

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request: Hon Costello and Hon Jones conflicts of interest

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 17 April 2025. You requested:

“Under the OIA may I please request all conflict of interest declarations relating to Ministers Costello and Jones.”

Information publicly available

The Cabinet Office, on behalf of the Prime Minister, supports Ministers in identifying and managing conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to their portfolios or other ministerial responsibilities.

Successive Ombudsmen have long held the view that Cabinet Office advice to Ministers is inherently confidential. It is in the public interest that the Cabinet Office can obtain and assess information about conflicts of interest and provide advice to Ministers on how to resolve them. Ministers are encouraged to seek advice from the Secretary of the Cabinet on a confidential basis. Details regarding conflicts of interest are not generally disclosed, in order to ensure the confidentiality of Cabinet proceedings, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs and in some cases to protect personal privacy.

However, some information about Ministers' interests is proactively released on our website and is available here: [Ministers' interests management | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#). Our website also has other information about how conflicts of interest are identified, managed and made public (including why only some information about conflicts is released).

Please note that some of the information on our website relating to Hon Jones has been updated since our response to your earlier OIA 2024/25-0673.

5005919

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua

Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand. Telephone: +64 (4) 830 5010.

Email: CabinetOffice@dpmc.govt.nz www.dpmc.govt.nz

In addition, the following information relating to Hon Jones is also publicly available:

1. Information about the management of interests in relation to Hon Shane Jones is publicly available here: www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-08/dPMC-roia-oia-2023-24-0970.pdf.
2. The arrangements for managing conflicts of interest for the Fast-track Approvals Bill were set out here: www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-releases-more-fast-track-detail.

Additional information released to you

I have decided to provide you with some further information which will be made publicly available on our website in the future (as part of the proactive release process):

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Matter at issue</i>	<i>Nature of conflict</i>	<i>Action taken</i>
Hon Jones	Potential conflict between Ministerial responsibilities as Minister for Regional Development and a personal interest (iwi and family connections to Te Aupōuri and Ngāi Takoto).	Personal	Responsibilities as Minister for Regional Development for any matters relating to applications by Te Aupōuri or Ngāi Takoto to the Regional Infrastructure Fund and any arrangements entered into as a result of those applications transferred to Hon Potaka on 25 March 2025. Actions (1), (2), (3) and (4) put in place.*
Hon Jones	Potential perceived conflict between Ministerial responsibilities as Minister for Regional Development and a personal interest (iwi and family connections to Te Aupōuri and Ngāi Takoto).	Personal	Responsibilities as Minister for Oceans and Fisheries for any matters relating to aquaculture settlements for the Northland region, including gazetting Aquaculture Settlement Areas or making aquaculture settlement offers from the Crown transferred to Hon Potaka on 25 March 2025. Actions (1), (2), (3) and (4) put in place.*

* The actions are:

- (1) officials will report directly to the Acting Minister (recipient of the transfer) on matters connected to the conflicted project inclusion decision;
- (2) any information relating to the conflicted project inclusion decision will be referred to the Acting Minister;

5005919

CABINET OFFICE, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, WELLINGTON 6011, NEW ZEALAND

Telephone: +64 (4) 830 5010. Email: CabinetOffice@dPMC.govt.nz

www.dPMC.govt.nz

- (3) the Minister with the conflict of interest will not take part in the conflicted project inclusion decision and will not receive relevant parts of Cabinet papers or official papers or reports relating to that conflicted project inclusion decision; and
- (4) when a conflicted project inclusion decision is discussed at Cabinet committee or Cabinet meetings, the relevant Minister will declare their interest and withdraw from that part of the relevant meeting.

Information to be withheld

The Cabinet Office holds other information relevant to your request which I have decided to withhold for the reasons set out earlier. The grounds for withholding this information under the Act are:

- 1. section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
- 2. section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence in order to prevent prejudice to the supply of information in the future
- 3. section 9(2)(f)(ii), to maintain collective and individual ministerial responsibility
- 4. section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- 5. section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

In making my decision, in accordance with section 9(1) of the Act I have considered whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to withhold the information, and I have concluded that it does not.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Nāku noa, nā



Nicola Purvis
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet