



CABINET OFFICE

15 August 2025



Ref: OIA-2025/26-0031

Tēnā koe 

Official Information Act request:  Animal welfare ministerial portfolio

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 21 July 2025. You requested:

In relation to the Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare), I would like to request the following information under the Official Information Act 1982.

- 1. What does the minister responsible for animal welfare's portfolio cover and include?*
- 2. Please provide a detailed outline of the formal responsibilities and statutory obligations of the minister responsible for animal welfare – currently Hon Andrew Hoggard. Specifically, information on any specific powers, duties, or functions conferred under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, and any other relevant legislation, regulations, or cabinet directives.*
- 3. What mechanisms are in place to hold the minister responsible for animal welfare accountable for decisions and actions relating to this portfolio?*
- 4. Is the minister responsible for animal welfare required to declare any and all potential conflicts of interest relating to the welfare of animals in New Zealand?*
- 5. Please provide all declarations of conflicts of interest made by the current minister responsible for animal welfare (Hon Andrew Hoggard), and the management plans generated to address these conflicts – i.e. which ministers are responsible for areas of animal welfare Minister Hoggard is unable to address due to conflicts of interest.*

This response addresses questions 4 and 5 of your request. As you know, questions 1-3 were transferred to the office of the Minister for Agriculture.

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Question 4: Is the Minister responsible for animal welfare required to declare any and all potential conflicts of interest relating to the welfare of animals in New Zealand

The Cabinet Manual explains how Ministers are expected to manage conflicts of interest, and is available here: <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-06/cabinet-manual-2023-v2.pdf>.

The relevant material is in Chapter 2, which explains that Ministers are responsible for ensuring that no conflict exists or appears to exist between their personal interests and their public duty (para 2.60). Ministers are responsible for proactively identifying and reviewing possible conflicts of interest, and ensuring that any conflicts are addressed promptly by taking one or more of the measures set out in paragraphs 2.75-2.76 of the Cabinet Manual. Ministers are ultimately responsible to the Prime Minister for their behaviour (para 2.56).

Question 5: Please provide all declarations of conflicts of interest made by the current minister responsible for animal welfare (Hon Andrew Hoggard), and the management plans generated to address these conflicts – i.e. which ministers are responsible for areas of animal welfare Minister Hoggard is unable to address due to conflicts of interest.

The Cabinet Office, on behalf of the Prime Minister, supports Ministers in identifying and managing conflicts of interests 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.

Information withheld

The Cabinet Office holds information relevant to your request which I have decided to withhold for the reasons set out above. 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.

Publicly available information relating to Hon Hoggard's interests

Hon Hoggard has explained publicly that he has declared conflicts of interest in relation to his brother and sister (see here: [Minister Andrew Hoggard's sister lobbied him opposing tougher baby formula rules | RNZ News](#)). Hon Hoggard noted at the time that he was confident any conflicts in relation to his siblings were appropriately managed.

Publicly available information relating to conflicts more generally

Some information about Ministers' interests is proactively released every six months on our website and is available here: [Ministers' interests management | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#). The website has other information about how some conflicts of interest are identified, managed and made public (including why only some information about conflicts is released). The information released covers transfers of responsibility and arrangements not to receive papers.

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



Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet