



## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

13 April 2026

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0539

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Official Information Act request: Correspondence regarding the possible removal of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the line of succession**

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 24 February 2026. You requested:

*On 24 February 2026, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said he/the Government had been in contact with the UK Cabinet Office regarding the possible removal of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the line of succession.*

*I request copies of all correspondence (emails, texts, memos, reports etc) regarding this matter.*

*I further request all communications regarding Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor for the month of February 2026, including communications regarding his arrest on February 19 (Feb 20 NZT).*

The time frame for responding to your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 14 working days because it necessitated consultations to be undertaken before a decision could be made on the request. Following this extension, I am now in a position to respond.

### **Information being released**

I have decided to release the information you have requested listed in the table below, subject to information being withheld as noted. Where information has been withheld in full it has not been provided. The relevant grounds under which information has been withheld are:

1. section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
2. section 6(b)(i), to protect 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
3. section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals

5149365

CABINET OFFICE, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, WELLINGTON 6011, NEW ZEALAND

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www.dpmc.govt.nz

4. section 9(2)(f)(i), to protect the confidentiality of Sovereign communications
5. section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
6. section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion

Item	Date	Description	Release decision
1	24/02/2026	advice to PMO on reply to journalist regarding Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor (AMW) 1990 medal	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a) and s9(2)(g)(i)
2	24/02/2026	email to the Palace	Withheld in full under s9(2)(f)(i)
3	24/02/2026	email with record of conversation with PMO regarding timeline of correspondence with UK Cabinet Office	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a)
4	24/02/2026	email to MoJ regarding succession	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a)
5	24/02/2026	emails with PMO regarding comment on succession	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a)
6	24/02/2026	advice to PMO on draft response regarding AMW	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a) and 9(2)(g)(i)
7	23/02/2026	email to UK CO advising of the NZ Govt position on AMW in line of succession	Released partial redaction under s9(2)(a) or out-of-scope
8	23/02/2026	email to PMO informing of correspondence from UK Cabinet Office and process for previous law of succession changes in 2013	Released with partial redaction under s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(a), and s9(2)(g)(i)
9	23/02/2026	advice to Government House on responding to media	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a)
10	23/02/2026	email chain with PMO & DPMC media on responding to AMW queries	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a)
11	23/02/2026	email with DPMC media on responding to media enquiries regarding AMW	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a)

12	23/02/2026	email with the Governor-General	Withheld in full under s9(2)(f)(i)
13	22/02/2026	email chain with PMO regarding succession and informing of UK Cabinet Office correspondence	Released with partial redaction under s6(a), s6(b)(i), and s9(2)(a)
14	22/02/2026	email from UK Cabinet Office	withheld in full under 6(a) & 6(b)(i)
15	20/02/2026	email record of conversation and advice to MFAT regarding AMW	Released in full

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

Rachel Hayward  
**Clerk of the Executive Council**

**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 5:00 pm  
**To:** Finn Stichbury <Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz>; Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** Matt Torbit [DPMC] <Matt.Torbit@dpmc.govt.nz>; Kathrine Wigley [DPMC] <kathrine.wigley@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Finn (Matt and Kathrine, fyi)

Here's a suggested response with an outline of the process. 9(2)(g)(i)

*In October 2025, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor made a public statement that he no longer intended to use the honours that had been conferred on him. The New Zealand 1990 Commemoration Medal had been conferred on him, along with other members of the Royal Family, in 1990.*

*When a person voluntarily relinquishes an honour, the award still needs to be formally cancelled. In the case of an award of the 1990 Medal to a member of the Royal Family, the warrant establishing the medal states that it must be the Sovereign who cancels the award (not the Governor-General).*

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1990/0024/latest/whole.html>

*The Prime Minister wrote to the King in November 2025 to recommend that the King direct that the award of the 1990 Medal be cancelled and annulled, and that Mr Mountbatten-Windsor's name be erased from the Register of the Medal. The Palace advised that the cancellation had been approved in December 2025. The Clerk of the Executive Council wrote to Mr Mountbatten-Windsor in December 2025 to inform him that the award of the Medal had been cancelled.*

*The warrant establishing the 1990 Medal does not require the publication in the New Zealand Gazette of the cancellation of an award of the Medal. This is in contrast to a number of other honours, where gazettal of forfeiture is required.*

Happy to discuss further. If you could forward me your final response, I'll let the Palace know.

Rachel

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**From:** Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 3:47 pm  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** FW: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

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**From:** Journalist 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 3:26 PM  
**To:** Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** Re: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

Thanks Finn, yes I saw the statement, thank you.

RE: the medal, I can't see any notice or reporting of this. What was the process - did the PM write to the GG? Can we get a copy of the letter? And how come it wasn't made public at the time (apologies if I am missing it).

--  
Journalist 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

On Tue, Feb 24, 2026 at 3:20 PM Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)> wrote:

Hi 9(2)(a)

The award to Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor of the New Zealand 1990 Commemoration Medal was cancelled in December 2025, by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister.

On your second question, assuming you've now seen our statements on it but the below is attributable to a spokesperson for the PM:

*"If the UK Government proposes to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the order of succession, New Zealand would support it. The UK Government has said any proposals would come after the police investigation concludes."*

Cheers  
Finn

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**From:** Journalist 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 11:27 AM  
**To:** PMO-Press <[PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

Kia ora all,

In 1990, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was awarded the New Zealand 1990 Commemoration Medal (to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi).

Can I ask if the PM has written to the Governor-General about beginning the procedure of stripping him of the medal? If so, can you give more detail (such as when, and what is the process?)

The Australian government has confirmed it would support any proposal to remove Mr Mountbatten-Windsor from the royal line of succession. Does the NZ government support this move and has support been expressed?

Many thanks,

Journalist 9(2)(a)

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Journalist 9(2)(a)

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**From:** [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)  
**To:** [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#); [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** FW: UK Cabinet Office  
**Date:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 2:46:40 pm  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Just confirming that I have spoken to Finn and indicated the areas where the timeline has got confused.

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**From:** Finn Stichbury <Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 2:01 pm  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz>; PMO-Press <PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: UK Cabinet Office

Thanks Rachel, can you please cast your eye over this rough transcript and I'll give you a call soon:

Amelia Wade: Why is New Zealand supporting the removal of Andrew Mountbatten?

PM: Oh look, the UK Government's leading that work and that decision. All I've said is we'll definitely support whatever they come to and we would definitely support that. We've been in contact with the UK Cabinet Office over the last week or so and our view is the UK Government wanting to put all options on the table. Obviously, the investigation needs to close out before they would then pass legislation to remove him from the line of succession. The bottom line is no one's above the law and once that investigation's closed, should the UK Government decide they want to remove him from the line of succession.

Adam Hollingworth: So you wouldn't go in like Anthony Albanese and pre-emptively write a letter then?

PM: We've already been in conversation with the UK Cabinet Office and they know we are supportive should they remove him from the line of succession, we would be very supportive of that decision.

Jason Walls: What do those conversations look like, with the Cabinet Office, who were you specifically talking to?

PM: Well our Cabinet Office talks to their Cabinet Office and we have conversations with the UK Government at an official level all the time.

Jason Walls: Was it you personally?

PM: No. But it's our officials and our position's well understood and that's been important

and I'm telling you what our position is now.

Jason Walls: Do you think it's important that prime minister Anthony Albanese made this very public declaration, he wrote a letter, do you think it's important that you do something the same, rather than leaving it at an official to official level?

PM: Well I think it's important that the UK Government are leading on their thinking around the line of succession. They will only pass legislation once all investigations are completed. All I've signalled to them and they well understand our position which is that we would very much support that. They have to go off obviously and get support of 14 Realm countries around the world and should they come to that decision, that's something we would be very supportive of.

Amelia Wade: Why was this announcement made in a WhatsApp message rather than an official letter?

PM: We can announce it any way, our position is clear. It's the same position as the Australian position but rather than a formal letter, we've been having conversations directly with the UK Government as you'd expect.

Jason Walls: Why not do both? A formal letter is a powerful message to something that has been a messy saga really underplays it. (?)

PM: So guys, I just say, if you want to get caught in process, this is a story where we've made it very clear. Should the UK Government remove him from the line of succession after they've completed all investigations, which is what the UK Government is telling us is what they would do. All we've signalled is that we would support that. I'm telling you publicly, we're talking about it now. That's the key thing. Should he be removed from the line of succession, New Zealand would support that decision.

Amelia Wade: Do you think this whole saga has been damaging for the royal family?

PM: Well again, nobody's above the law. I'm conscious there's an ongoing investigation in place but we expect everybody to be treated by the law. What we have seen has been incredibly disturbing, incredibly concerning. But as I said, should he be removed? And that's something the UK Government wants to do and if there's anything else, they've got all options on the table.

Amelia Wade: Why is this action [unclear] and it wasn't [unclear] on the release of Virginia Giuffre's memoir?

PM: Well again, new information has come to light, obviously the UK Government leads a conversation about line of succession. It does need the sign on of 14 other Realm countries, from memory. And all we can do is say "look, we'd be very supportive of that, should that be the decision of the UK Government." We would sign up for that. This has been a horrific amount of abuse that has taken place across this country, across the world,

you've seen elites involved and connected to Epstein in a way that is just utterly unacceptable but again, we've got an investigation going on. The UK Government by its own admission says that all options are on the table. But they will look at legislation and what they need to do post that investigation playing out.

Jason Walls: This saga has again spurred republicans in New Zealand to ask the question, should we still be part of the commonwealth?

PM: I haven't seen a lot of public media reporting of republican views in light of all of that. I think everyone finds the Epstein situation abhorrent. Everyone finds the abuse of young women in the way that has clearly happened unacceptable and just abhorrent again and as you know it's about a specific issue in this case, which has been talked about in the UK this week. We just want to reassure the British Government that should they make that decision, we would support that.

Adam Hollingworth: [Unclear] a bad egg isn't it?

PM: We don't make that decision. You make the process in terms of constitutional line of succession. It's legislation that needs to get passed, led by the UK Government but with the endorsement and support of the other Realm countries. The UK Government has stressed to us, there's an investigation ongoing. That needs to get closed out before any legislation would be implemented and brought to their parliament. Of course, all I'm signalling is should they wish to remove him from the line of succession, we would support that.

Jason Walls: On the communication between our Cabinet Office and their Cabinet Office, did that happen before or after Anthony Albanese's letter?

PM: We've talked about this over recent days.

Jason Walls: So before the letter came out?

PM: Yes.

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**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 1:28 PM

**To:** Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>; PMO-Press <[PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz)>

**Cc:** Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <[grace.miles@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:grace.miles@dpmc.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** RE: UK Cabinet Office

**Importance:** High

Further to this Finn, we've just seen Stuff reporting the PM as saying the NZ Cabinet Office had communicated its position prior to Mr Albanese's letter to Keir Starmer – the inference

in the article is that the position we communicated before the Australian letter was that NZ would support removing AMW if the UK proposed it. As you know, that's not correct – you may wish to clarify.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/politics/360942752/luxon-says-he-open-andrew-being-cut-line-succession>

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**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC]

**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 1:22 pm

**To:** Finn S tichbury <[finn.stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:finn.stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>; PMO-Press <[pmo-press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:pmo-press@parliament.govt.nz)>

**Cc:** Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <[Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** UK Cabinet Office

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora Finn

Just noting for your information the dates of our exchanges with the UK Cabinet Office about the line of succession and AMW:

- Sunday 22 February late evening: the UK Cabinet Office sent us an email setting out the UK government's position on succession. I responded to acknowledge receipt.
- Monday 23 February – NZ Cabinet Office informed the UK Cabinet Office that in response to media queries PMO would point to the UK position.
- Tuesday 24 February – NZ Cabinet Office advised UK Cabinet Office that if the UK Government proposes to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the order of succession, New Zealand would support it.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Nāku, nā Rachel



**Rachel Hayward (she/her)**  
**Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council**  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

9(2)(a)  
**Email:** [Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)

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**From:** [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)  
**To:** [^EXT: Kim Smith](#)  
**Cc:** [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#); [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** succession  
**Date:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 12:20:25 pm  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora Kim

I'm getting in touch with you because MOJ administers the Royal Succession Act 2013. You may have seen that overnight the Australian Prime Minister wrote to Keir Starmer to advise that the Australian government would agree to any proposal to change the line of succession to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor.

The Prime Minister's office is now responding to queries about the New Zealand position as follows:

*If the UK Government proposes to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the order of succession, New Zealand would support it. The UK Government has said any proposals would come after the police investigation concludes.*

I have asked PMO to engage with your Minister's office, and the UK Cabinet Office has been informed.

It would be good to have a call to discuss when it suits you – let me know if there is a time today or tomorrow that would work for you.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Nāku, nā Rachel



**Rachel Hayward (she/her)**  
**Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council**  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

9(2)(a)

Email: [Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)

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**From:** Finn Stichbury <Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 11:53:20 AM  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: can you send me the final wording of your response on succession?

Here is a comment attributable to a spokesperson for the Prime Minister:

*If the UK Government proposes to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the order of succession, New Zealand would support it. The UK Government has said any proposals would come after the police investigation concludes.*

---

**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 11:53 AM  
**To:** Finn Stichbury <Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** can you send me the final wording of your response on succession?

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Classification - administrative

So I can send it on – the PM can then say the UK government has been informed.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Nāku, nā Rachel



**Rachel Hayward (she/her)**  
**Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council**  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

9(2)(a)  
**Email:** [Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)

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Proactively Released

**From:** [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)  
**To:** [Finn Stichbury](#)  
**Cc:** [PMO-Press](#); [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#); [PM Staff 9\(2\)\(a\)](#) ; [^Parliament: Cameron Burrows](#); [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Draft comment on Andrew  
**Date:** Tuesday, 24 February 2026 11:21:05 am

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Thanks Finn - just confirming there are 15 Realms.

9(2)(g)(i)

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**From:** Finn Stichbury <Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 10:52 AM  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** PMO-Press <PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz>; Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>; [PM Staff 9\(2\)\(a\)](#) ; [^Parliament: Cameron Burrows](#) <Cameron.burrows@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** Draft comment on Andrew

Hi Rachel,

Here is a draft response for feedback.

Attributable to a spokesperson for the PM:

9(2)(g)(i)

Finn Stichbury  
Chief Press Secretary  
Office of Rt Hon Chris Luxon  
021 528 488

On Mon, 23 Feb 2026, 22:58 Rachel Hayward [DPMC],  
<[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)> wrote:

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

UK Cabinet Office staff 9(2)(a)

Kia ora

The Prime Minister's office has asked me to advise that if the UK Government proposes to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the order of succession, New Zealand would support it. The following comment will be provided to media, in response to requests:

*If the UK Government proposes to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the order of succession, New Zealand would support it. The UK Government has said any proposals would come after the police investigation concludes.*

Ngā mihi maioha,

Nāku, nā Rachel



**Rachel Hayward (she/her)**  
Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council

Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

9(2)(a)

Email: [Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)

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**From:** PM Staff 9(2)(a)  
**To:** [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Cc:** [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#); [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** RE: line of succession  
**Date:** Monday, 23 February 2026 4:08:34 pm  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Thanks Rachel

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**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 3:48 PM  
**To:** PM Staff 9(2)(a)  
**Cc:** Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <grace.miles@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** line of succession

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora PM Staff 9(2)(a)

Just letting you know as our chief PMO Royal person that we had correspondence from the UK Cabinet Office over the weekend, setting out their public position on calls to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the line of succession:

6(a) & 6(b)(i)



I have shared that with Finn and PMO Media, and they are using a standard line to respond to media inquiries – there have been a couple from the UK today.

You may remember the process that New Zealand went through when the law of succession was amended in 2013 so that it was no longer based on gender. The changes were agreed at a meeting alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Perth, Australia, in October 2011, and in subsequent discussions between the Realms.

New Zealand had to pass its own legislation, which occurred in 2013, but the commencement of that legislation had to wait until all the Realms were in a position to introduce the changes, to avoid asymmetric rules of Royal succession arising across the Realms. That took quite a while - by agreement, all the Realms finally took steps to

commence their legislation on the same day in March 2015. Hopefully that experience ironed out the process so it would be more streamlined today if further changes were to be made.

New Zealand took a leading role in those reforms, in terms of coordinating the Reams, at the request of the Palace. 9(2)(g)(i)

This is all just for your information at the moment, but always happy to discuss.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Nāku, nā Rachel



**Rachel Hayward (she/her)**  
**Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council**  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

9(2)(a)

Email: [Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)

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Out of scope

**From:** Journalist 9(2)(a)

**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 11:19 am

**To:** GHInfo [DPMC] <GHInfo@govthouse.govt.nz>

**Subject:** Media Request

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Hello,

The government is considering introducing legislation to remove Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor from the line of royal succession. The move would require an act of Parliament and the support of the 14 Commonwealth countries where Charles III is head of state.

Will New Zealand be supporting this move? Has it received any correspondence from the UK government on the issue?

Please could you get back to me by the end of the day.

Thank you very much,  
Journalist 9(2)(a)



The Independent • Independent Studio • Bulletin • IndyBest  
Indy100 • BuzzFeed • Tasty • Seasoned • HuffPost (UK and Ire)

14-18 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1AH  
1 Pennsylvania Plaza, Suite 304, New York, NY 10119

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**The Independent:** Independent Digital News and Media Limited, Alphabeta, 14-18 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1AH, U.K. (reg. no 7320345)

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**From:** PM Staff 9(2)(a)  
**To:** [DPMC Media \[DPMC\]](#); [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#); [Finn Stichbury](#)  
**Cc:** [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#); [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Monday, 23 February 2026 12:48:31 pm  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

Thanks Blair – I'll go back to Harriette.



PM Staff 9(2)(a)  
**Secretary | Office of Rt Hon Christopher Luxon**  
Prime Minister  
Minister for National Security and Intelligence  
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services  
**9(2)(a)**  
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

**From:** DPMC Media [DPMC] <[Media@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Media@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 12:43 PM  
**To:** PM Staff 9(2)(a) <[PMStaff9\(2\)\(a\)@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMStaff9(2)(a)@parliament.govt.nz)>; Rachel Hayward <[Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>; PMO-Press <[PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <[grace.miles@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:grace.miles@dpmc.govt.nz)>; DPMC Media [DPMC] <[Media@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Media@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks [PM Staff 9\(2\)\(a\)](#) – we've just had another on this topic through from The Independent UK (see attached).

Let me know if you'll go back directly to this one too.

Cheers

Ngā manaakitanga  
Blair

**From:** PM Staff 9(2)(a) <[PMStaff9\(2\)\(a\)@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMStaff9(2)(a)@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 12:04 pm  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>; PMO-Press <[PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <[Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz)>; DPMC Media [DPMC] <[Media@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Media@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Rachel – I'll go back to Stanley.



PM Staff 9(2)(a)  
**Secretary | Office of Rt Hon Christopher Luxon**  
Prime Minister  
Minister for National Security and Intelligence  
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services  
**9(2)(a)**  
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 10:40 AM  
**To:** Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>; PMO-Press <[PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <[grace.miles@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:grace.miles@dpmc.govt.nz)>; DPMC Media

[DPMC] <Media@dpmc.govt.nz>

**Subject:** FW: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Kia ora Finn

We have received a query about succession (via MFAT) from a UK reporter. Given the information now provided by the UK Cabinet Office, we suggest that the standard answer to these queries from now on could be:

*The UK government has stated that it is considering whether further steps are required in relation to the line of succession. Any changes proposed would require consultation and agreement with the Realms. We have no further comment at this time.*

If you're happy with that, can we leave this one with PMO for response?

Happy to discuss,

Rachel

---

**From:** Journalist 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Saturday, 21 February 2026 10:18 am  
**To:** MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

You don't often get email from Journalist 9(2)(a) [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

I've been given this email by someone in the press office, I am a general reporter for Press Association in the UK. I'm emailing to ask for a comment on removing Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor (the former prince) from the line of succession following his arrest for misconduct in public office.

Kind regards,

Journalist 9(2)(a)



Journalist 9(2)(a)



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**To:** [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#); [DPMC Media \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Cc:** [Cherie Blithe \[DPMC\]](#); [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#); [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Monday, 23 February 2026 9:45:34 am  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Great, thanks Rachel. I can let MFAT know it will go to PMO

-Blair

---

**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 9:27 am  
**To:** DPMC Media [DPMC] <[Media@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Media@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** Cherie Blithe [DPMC] <[Cherie.Blithe@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Cherie.Blithe@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <[Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Blair – we’ve had a bit more info over the weekend from the UK Cabinet Office, so we might have a more than no comment response – leave it with us to prepare a response for PMO.

---

**From:** DPMC Media [DPMC] <[Media@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Media@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 9:25 am  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** DPMC Media [DPMC] <[Media@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Media@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Cherie Blithe [DPMC] <[Cherie.Blithe@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Cherie.Blithe@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Grace Miles [DPMC] <[Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Grace.Miles@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** FW: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Kia ora Rachel,

We’ve received the below from MFAT on AMB – let us know your view on DPMC taking this one, or passing to PMO (noting the appropriate response either way will be no comment)

Ngā manaakitanga  
Blair

---

**From:** MEDIA <[media@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:media@mfat.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 February 2026 8:58 am  
**To:** DPMC Media [DPMC] <[Media@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Media@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** MEDIA <[media@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:media@mfat.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** FW: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Morning!

Is this one we can send your way? Or more appropriate to send to PMO?

Cheers

**Sarah Robson**

**Senior Media Adviser**  
Communications Division  
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

9(2)(a) | E [sarah.robson@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:sarah.robson@mfat.govt.nz)

UNCLASSIFIED

---

**From:** Journalist 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Saturday, 21 February 2026 10:18 am  
**To:** MEDIA <[media@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:media@mfat.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

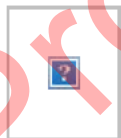
You don't often get email from Journalist 9(2)(a) [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

I've been given this email by someone in the press office, I am a general reporter for Press Association in the UK. I'm emailing to ask for a comment on removing Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor (the former prince) from the line of succession following his arrest for misconduct in public office.

Kind regards,

Journalist 9(2)(a)



Journalist 9(2)(a)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)  
**To:** [Finn Stichbury](#)  
**Cc:** [PMO-Press](#); [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#); [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** RE: RNZ request  
**Date:** Sunday, 22 February 2026 11:04:12 pm  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

---

Hi Finn

Further to our exchange on Friday about the line of succession, I've just had an email from the UK Cabinet Office on that topic – there has been a lot of reporting on the UK government's position over the weekend.

6(a) & 6(b)(i)

Cheers

Rachel

---

**From:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC]  
**Sent:** Friday, 20 February 2026 10:42 am  
**To:** Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** PMO-Press <[PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz)>; Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <[Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: RNZ request

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Finn

You could say that while no specific advice has been sought, yes, legislation would be required, and it would require coordination and agreement between all the Realms - as it did in 2013 when the Royal Succession Act was introduced which changed the order of succession. (That came into effect in 2015, in coordination with the UK and other Realms.)

Ngā mihi maioha,

Nāku, nā Rachel



**Rachel Hayward (she/her)**  
Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council  
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

9(2)(a)

Email: [Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)

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---

**From:** Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 20 February 2026 10:27 am  
**To:** Rachel Hayward [DPMC] <[Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Rachel.Hayward@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** PMO-Press <[PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:PMO-Press@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** FW: RNZ request

Hi Rachel,

We won't be doing this but do you have a suggested approach on the line of succession thing please?

Cheers  
Finn

---

**From:** Journalist 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Friday, 20 February 2026 10:26 AM  
**To:** Finn Stichbury <[Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Finn.Stichbury@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RNZ request

Hi Finn,

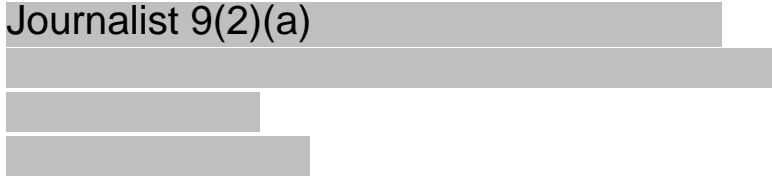
Journalist 9(2)(a) here at RNZ Midday Report with Guyon Espiner.

Would the Prime Minister be available for a quick interview with Guyon today, 12.15pm, 5mins max, on Mountbatten's arrest, and what the implications are for New Zealand - does NZ have to legislate as a commonwealth nation to have Mountbatten removed from the line of succession etc.

Thanks for considering,

Journalist 9(2)(a)

Journalist 9(2)(a)



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**From:** [Rachel Hayward \[DPMC\]](#)  
**To:** [Nicola Purvis \[DPMC\]](#); [Grace Miles \[DPMC\]](#)  
**Subject:** AMW  
**Date:** Friday, 20 February 2026 7:37:51 am

---

Rod Harris (EUR division) just called to ask what we needed and whether he should be providing lines to his Minister and the PM. I said I had already been in touch with PMO, and suggested anything for his Minister should be along the lines of 'the law will take its course, no further comment.'

He will pass on any reporting from the NZHC in London.

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