



## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

10 April 2026

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA OIA-2025/26-0573

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Official Information Act request: Communications and advice relating to Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and Peter Mandelson**

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 11 March 2026. You requested:

*“All communications to the UK Government on behalf of the New Zealand Government in relation to both Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and Peter Mandelson. In addition, please provide any official advice on the matter, should it exist.”*

I have interpreted the second part of your request for ‘official advice on the matter’ to be for official advice on communications with the UK Government in relation to Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor or Peter Mandelson.

### **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; and
4. section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

5147946

CABINET OFFICE, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, WELLINGTON 6011, NEW ZEALAND

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www.dpmc.govt.nz

Item	Date & time	Description	Decision
1	25/02/2026 17:48	email chain of international correspondence including UK Cabinet Office	Withheld in full under s6(a) & 6(b)(i)
2	24/02/2026 14:46	emails with PMO regarding Cabinet Office correspondence	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a)
3	23/02/2026 22:58	email to UK Cabinet Office	Released with partial redaction under s9(2)(a) or out of scope
4	23/02/2026 16:08	email to PMO informing of correspondence from UK Cabinet Office	Released with partial redaction under s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(a), and s9(2)(g)(i)
5	23/02/2026 13:24	email chain of international correspondence including UK Cabinet Office	Withheld in full under s6(a) & 6(b)(i)
6	23/02/2026 10:32	correspondence with UK Cabinet Office	Withheld in full under s6(a) & 6(b)(i)
7	22/02/2026 11:04	emails with PMO regarding a media enquiry	Released with partial redaction under s6(a), s6(b)(i), and s9(2)(a)

Searches for information related to Peter Mandelson have returned no material in scope of your request. This aspect of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act; the information requested is not held by the department and I have no grounds for believing that the information is either held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority; or connected more closely with the functions of another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation or of a local authority.

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

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

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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Proactively Released

**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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**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](#)

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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

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**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  
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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

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**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,

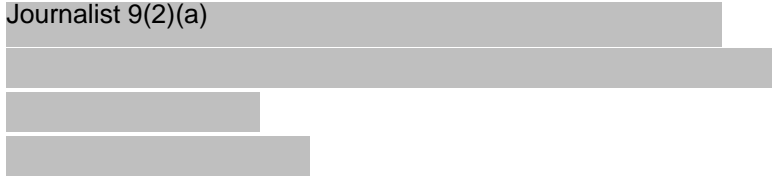
Journalist 9(2)(a) here at RNZ Midday Report with Guyon Espiner.

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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