



23 April 2026

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0645

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request for the number of current Cabinet Ministers or public service leaders that are affiliated with hierarchy-based community groups

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, which was received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 10 April 2026. You requested:

“Please advise how many of the current Cabinet members or Departmental “heads” are affiliated to hierarchy based community groups, such as Free Masons, churches and Honor based societies.”

On 14 April, we informed you of our decision to transfer the part of your request for the number of departmental “heads” that are affiliated with hierarchy-based community groups to the Public Service Commission. This reply covers the remaining part of your request.

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. As part of that work, the Cabinet Office keeps a record of interests for each Minister, which includes interests that may give rise to a conflict. Those records may include Ministers’ affiliations or associations (either current or former) with entities, where these may give rise to a conflict or perception of a conflict. Ministers are not required to disclose all their affiliations to the Cabinet Office.

We have interpreted “hierarchy-based community groups” as being organised structures where members are ranked according to seniority, authority, or specific roles. This encompasses significantly more than the non-exhaustive examples you have given of Freemasons and churches. On that interpretation, the information we hold indicates that 14 of the current 20 Cabinet Ministers could be considered to be affiliated with hierarchy-based community groups. As noted above, Ministers are not required to disclose all their affiliations to the Cabinet Office.

Details regarding conflicts of interest disclosed to the Cabinet Office are not generally released, 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. This approach has been accepted by successive Ombudsmen, over many years, because 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 on a confidential basis.

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 DPMC 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

Proactively Released