



CABINET OFFICE

4 May 2026



Ref: OIA 2025/26-0678

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request: [REDACTED] Potential conflicts of interest involving Minister Shane Jones related to the Fisheries Amendment Bill

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

Shane Jones is the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries and is actively promoting the Fisheries Amendment Bill which had its first reading in March 2026.

The Fisheries Amendment Bill is widely considered to be pro commercial fishers, and to be detrimental to other interests including recreational, customary fishers and to the seabed.

NZFirst is reported to have received substantial donations from commercial fishing interests including Vela, United Fisheries and Sanfords in recent years.

Fiduciary and other duties owed by elected representatives and reflected in the NZ Cabinet manual require Ministers to act in the public interest of all New Zealanders AND to disclose all potential and perceived conflicts of interest and presumably to stand down where there is a conflict.

Please provide:

- 1) copies of all conflict disclosures by Shane Jones as Minister of Fisheries and/ or Minister of Oceans;*
- 2) all related correspondence and/ or analysis;*
- 3) any queries or other information about any possible conflicts of interest involving Shane Jones and/ or NZFirst and how any such actual or perceived conflicts of interest should be assessed and managed, including prior to his appointment as Minister of Fisheries in 2023 or subsequently; and*
- 4) any queries from media and/ or others and any analysis or responses about any queries or complaints of actual or perceived conflicts of interest by Minister Shane Jones.*

This query is urgent due to the imminent closing date for submissions on the

5152457

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua

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Fisheries Amendment Bill and the related public interest so an urgent response would be appreciated.

The Cabinet Office emailed you on 28 April 2026 regarding your request, asking you to consider whether your request (particularly part 4) could be refined. We also asked you to clarify your reasons for requesting urgency. We have not heard back from you but, taking into consideration your request for urgency, I have decided to respond to parts 1-3 of your request in the interim.

Information about donations

Each registered political party (including New Zealand First) must send a return of the donations and loans they receive each year to the Electoral Commission. This information is then made available to the public – see [here](#).

The Cabinet Manual includes guidance regarding candidate and party donations to Ministers, including that Ministers, as members of Parliament, may accept political donations, either to their political party or their own campaign (see paragraph [2.100](#)). Campaign donations (donations to individual Ministers' electoral campaigns) are treated as a pecuniary interest and are managed by Ministers as conflicts of interest – the Cabinet Office supports Ministers to manage these interests including in developing appropriate management plans, as required. Donations made to a political party are not generally treated as conflicts of interest for Ministers who are members of that party.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 of your request

The Cabinet Office holds material relevant to parts 1, 2 and 3 of your request. We have interpreted part 3 of your request as seeking queries received by the Cabinet Office and related advice regarding Hon Jones' or New Zealand First's interests since the 2023 General Election.

The Cabinet Office does not hold information relating to queries about conflicts involving New Zealand First. The Cabinet Office supports Ministers in identifying and managing conflicts of interest. It does not provide conflicts of interest advice to political parties. I have therefore refused that subpart of your request under section 18(g), on the basis that this information is not held by the Cabinet Office.

In relation to the remainder of parts 1, 2 and 3 of your request, 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. 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 relating to Ministers' interests and provide advice to Minister on how to resolve them.

However, some information about Ministers interests is proactively released on our website, here: www.dPMC.govt.nz/our-business-units/cabinet-office/ministers-and-their-portfolio/ministers-interests. Proactively released information covers transfers of responsibility and arrangements not to receive papers (including the transfer of responsibilities from Hon Jones (as Minister for Oceans and Fisheries) to Hon Potaka for matters relating to aquaculture settlements for the Northland region).

Further information relating to Hon Jones' conflicts of interest within this administration is also available in previous responses to Official Information Requests on the DPMC website: [here](#) - e.g. [Response to OIA request OIA-2024/25-0319](#) (November 2024).

Accordingly, I have refused your request in part under section 18(d) of the Act, on the 5152457

basis that some of this information is publicly available.

There is additional information that the Cabinet Office holds relevant to these parts of your request which I have decided to withhold in full under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
- section 9(2)(ba)(ii), to prevent damage to the public interest
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- section 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

In making this 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
Secretary of the Cabinet