CABINET OFFICE

3 June 2026

[redacted]

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0704

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Official Information Act request: Conflicts of interest

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 5 May 2026. You requested:

> *Under the OIA, I request copies of all assessments, advice, correspondence, memoranda, meeting notes, text messages, and records held by the Cabinet Office, DPMC, or the Prime Minister's Office relating to:*
>
> *1. Any advice provided to Hon Chris Bishop regarding conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest concerning the RiverLink project, the CityLink (Melling) walking and cycling bridge, the Melling Interchange, or related decisions involving his Hutt South electorate — in any of his capacities as a Minister, including but not limited to his roles as Minister of Housing, Minister of Infrastructure, and Minister of Transport.*
>
> *2. Any advice, assessment, or consideration by the Cabinet Office as to whether the conflict-of-interest management plan for Hon Bishop in respect of the Melling Interchange also applied, or should have applied, to decisions made by Hon Bishop in his capacity as Minister of Housing — including, but not limited to, decisions relating to the Kāinga Ora Infrastructure Acceleration Fund (IAF), amendments to IAF agreements, or the reallocation of IAF funding to the CityLink (Melling) bridge.*
>
> *3. Any advice, guidance, or communication concerning the legitimacy of the decision-making process by which Kāinga Ora Infrastructure Acceleration Fund money was transferred or reallocated to fund the CityLink (Melling) bridge, including whether those decisions were made in accordance with the Cabinet Manual and applicable conflict-of-interest requirements.*
>
> *4. Any advice, guidance, or communication between the Cabinet Office, DPMC, or the Prime Minister's Office regarding whether Hon Bishop should have sought advice on, or recused himself from, decisions relating to the IAF reallocation, the CityLink bridge, or the Melling Interchange — in any of his Ministerial capacities.*

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5. Any advice or assessment relating to compliance with the Cabinet Manual as it pertains to Ministers advocating for, or making decisions on, projects located in their own electorate — specifically any advice prompted by, or provided in the context of, the Office of the Auditor-General's inquiries into the CityLink bridge project.

6. Any correspondence, briefings, or records relating to inquiries by the Office of the Auditor-General into the CityLink bridge project or the IAF reallocation, to the extent held by the Cabinet Office, DPMC, or the Prime Minister's Office.

I note that the Office of the Auditor-General has been seeking information about the CityLink bridge project. I submit that this significantly strengthens the public interest in disclosure of the information sought above, particularly in relation to items that were withheld from previous requests under sections 9(2)(ba)(ii), 9(2)(f)(iv), and 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act.

Where a document that falls within scope of this request cannot be released in full, please supply a summary of that document's contents. Where any document falls within scope, please release it in full, including sections which might otherwise be considered out of scope."

As advised to you on 19 May 2026, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (including the Cabinet Office) does not hold "copies of all assessments, advice, correspondence, memoranda, meeting notes, text messages, and records" held by the Prime Minister's Office. This part of your request was transferred to that office.

Part 1

The Cabinet Office holds material relevant to part 1 of your request, specifically in relation to conflicts of interest advice provided to Hon Chris Bishop regarding the Melling Interchange.

I provided this information to you in response to part of the request you made on 18 November 2025. Our response was provided to you in the form of a summary as permitted by section 16(1)(e) of the Act. This is publicly available – here.

As I explained in that response, and as Hon Bishop has confirmed publicly, the Cabinet Office discussed with Hon Bishop that he would no longer advocate as MP for the Melling project but would act solely in his ministerial capacity in relation to any decisions relating to Melling. The Cabinet Office's advice to Hon Bishop regarding the Melling Interchange has not changed since this information was last provided to you.

Hon Bishop in response to a related point of order on 19 November 2025 said that "the portfolio in relation to the Cabinet Manual is essentially agnostic to the portfolio, it's about being a Minister" - here.

I previously indicated to you, in my response to your 18 November 2025 request, that the Cabinet Office does not hold any material relating to advice to Hon Bishop regarding conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts concerning the RiverLink project, the City Link (Melling) walking and cycling bridge, or related decisions involving his Hutt South electorate. This has not changed. Hon Bishop has commented publicly that he has not made a specific request to the Cabinet Office for conflict-of-interest advice relating to the City Link bridge decision.

Parts 2, 3 and 4

The Cabinet Office holds no advice, assessments or considerations relevant to parts 2,3 and 4 of your request. Those parts of your request are therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

Part 5

We have interpreted this part of your request to be for Cabinet Office advice to individual Ministers about conflicts of interest relating to projects in their electorates that was prompted by or provided in the context of the Audit Office's request for information relating to the CityLink bridge project. This would cover any advice within this scope that was provided from when we received the Audit Office's request, until 5 May 2026 (when we received your request).

The Cabinet Office holds no information within scope of this part of your request, excluding any information that falls under the scope of part 6 below. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

Part 6

We have interpreted this part of your request as seeking the Cabinet Office's external correspondence, briefings or records relating to the information request by the Audit Office about the CityLink bridge project. The Cabinet Office holds information that falls within this scope of the request.

This information consists of correspondence and updates between the Cabinet Office the Audit Office, the Prime Minister's Office and Hon Bishop's office (including about the Prime Minister's response to a written parliamentary question 8600 which acknowledged that DPMC had received an information request from the Audit Office for information about the City Link bridge project).

I have decided to withhold this information in full under the following sections of the Act, as applicable:

- section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals;
- section 9(2)(ba)(ii), to protect information that is subject to an obligation of confidence, where making the information available would damage the public interest;
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials; and
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

Public interest assessment

In making the decision regarding your request, 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. I have concluded that it does not.

As I have addressed in previous responses to you, it is in the public interest that the Cabinet Office can obtain and assess information provided by Ministers, to provide them advice on how to manage conflicts of interest.

I have previously provided you with a summary of the Cabinet Office's advice to Hon Bishop relating to the Melling Interchange. That information was released following our assessment of the public interest. In that case, I considered that there was a particular

public interest to confirm the details of the advice that Hon Bishop had mentioned in answers to oral Parliamentary questions.

I do not consider that the fact of the information request from the Audit Office about the City Link bridge has changed the public interest, such that it now outweighs the need to withhold the information related to part 6 of your request. I consider that it is in the public interest that the Audit Office can conduct its work in a confidential manner. This is also an expectation of the Audit Office. If there is a public interest in the outcome, we anticipate that the Audit Office will make that assessment and inform the public.

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