CABINET OFFICE

10 June 2026

[redacted]

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0720

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Official Information Act request: Conflicts of interest relating to the gene technology reform programme

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 12 May 2026. You requested:

> *This request is made pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982. It seeks information relating to conflict-of-interest identification, financial interest assessment, and decision-making integrity in connection with the Gene Technology reform programme.*
>
> *2.Scope of Request*
>
> *A. Conflict of Interest Identification*
>
> - *Documents identifying any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts involving Judith Collins*
> - *Includes internal assessments, briefings, emails, and meeting records*
>
> *B. Financial Interest Consideration*
>
> - *Documents assessing any financial interests relevant to decision-making*
> - *Any reference to direct or indirect financial benefit arising from policy decisions*
>
> *C. Conflict Management Measures*
>
> - *Steps taken to declare, manage, or mitigate conflicts*
> - *Recusal decisions or delegation of authority*
>
> *E. Register Cross-Checks*
>
> - *Any checks against the Register of Pecuniary Interests*
>
> *F. Internal Commentary*
>
> - *Documents identifying risks, concerns, or critique of decision-making integrity*

Your request was transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) from The Treasury under section 14(b)(i) of the Act.

We have interpreted your request to be for information from this administration relating to "conflict of interest identification, financial interest assessment and decision-making integrity in connection with the Gene Technology reform programme".

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.

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 this information and provide advice to Ministers on how to solve them. 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.

The Cabinet Office holds information that falls within the scope of 2F of your request specifically relating to 'decision-making integrity' in connection with the Gene Technology reform programme. I have decided to release this information to you in part, withholding information where appropriate under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals;
- section 9(2)(h), to maintain legal professional privilege;
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

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.

This information relates to Hon Goldsmith acting as the Acting Attorney-General for the Gene Technology Bill. Hon Goldsmith was appointed as Acting Attorney-General on 29 April 2024, for the purpose of exercising all law officer functions of the Attorney-General including advising on rule of law considerations in relation to specified significant policy initiatives and matters where Hon Collins had a conflict of interest – see the warrant, here. Related information was also proactively released by DPMC, see here.

Having a different Minister be the Acting Attorney-General when the Attorney-General is responsible for a significant policy initiative (in another ministerial portfolio) helps to maintain decision-making integrity by avoiding any perception that the Attorney-General may not act impartially in relation to that initiative.

The Gene Technology Bill was identified as a significant policy initiative within Hon Collins portfolio, as the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology at the time. The standing warrant appointing Hon Goldsmith as the Acting Attorney-General was therefore engaged.

You also requested information relating to checks against the Register of Pecuniary Interests. At the standard six-monthly meetings with Ministers about their conflicts of interest, the Cabinet Office brings the Ministers' latest entry from the MPs' pecuniary interests register to the discussion. This is so that Ministers can signal to the Cabinet Office if advice is required relating to these interests, from a Cabinet Manual perspective. Advice and guidance on MPs' obligations relating to these registers (and related declarations) is provided to members by the Registrar of Pecuniary Interests, not the Cabinet Office. The Registers are publicly available – here.

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

From: Nicola Purvis [DPMC]
To: Cassie Nicholson; ^CrownLaw: Una Jagose
Bcc: 07 Portfolio advice support 04 Attorney General
Subject: RE: Gene Tech Bill - re AG standing warrant
Date: Thursday, 20 June 2024 3:03:36 pm
Attachments: image001.png

[redacted]

Thanks Cassie. We're comfortable with your proposed briefing to the AG. Let us know if she wants to go ahead with triggering the Acting AG arrangement and we can put a note to the PM.
Ngā mihi
Nicola

From: Cassie Nicholson <Cassie.Nicholson@pco.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 5:41 PM
To: ^CrownLaw: Una Jagose <una.jagose@crownlaw.govt.nz>; Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: Gene Tech Bill - re AG standing warrant

Kia ora kōrua
s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(h)
[redacted]

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Grateful for your thoughts,
Ngā mihi
Cassie



Cassie Nicholson | She/Her
Tumuaki | Chief Parliamentary Counsel

Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata | Parliamentary Counsel Office
2 The Terrace | PO Box 18 070 | Wellington 6160

M s9(2)(a) | E cassie.nicholson@pco.govt.nz
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Parliamentary Counsel Office Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata

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Website: www.pco.govt.nz Free access to NZ legislation: www.legislation.govt.nz

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From: Nicola Purvis [DPMC]
To: EXT: Cassie Nicholson; ^CrownLaw: Una Jagose
Cc: ^PCO: Richard Wallace; Rachel Hayward [DPMC]
Subject: RE: Briefing to AG - Acting AG warrant - Gene Technology Bill
Date: Monday, 24 June 2024 11:47:45 am
Attachments: image002.png
image003.png
Briefing to AG - Acting AG warrant - Gene Technology Bill.docx

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[redacted]

Mōrena Cassie

Your briefing (attached) looks good to us. Our only specific comment is that the reference to the PM at the top of page 3 should say "we will work with the Cabinet Office to seek the Prime Minister's consent" – to be consistent with the letter to Hon Goldsmith.

Ngā mihi
Nicola

Nicola Purvis (she/her)
Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet (Constitutional and Honours)
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

Direct dial: +64 4 831 4824 Mobile:s9(2)(a)
Email: Nicola.purvis@dpmc.govt.nz

The Cabinet Office is a business unit of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

From: Cassie Nicholson <Cassie.Nicholson@pco.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, June 21, 2024 12:31 PM
To: Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>; ^CrownLaw: Una Jagose <una.jagose@crownlaw.govt.nz>
Cc: ^PCO: Richard Wallace <Richard.Wallace@pco.govt.nz>
Subject: Briefing to AG - Acting AG warrant - Gene Technology Bill

Kia ora kōrua

s9(2)(h) [redacted]

Aku mihi, C

Cassie Nicholson | She/Her
Tumuaki | Chief Parliamentary Counsel

Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata | Parliamentary Counsel Office
2 The Terrace | PO Box 18 070 | Wellington 6160

M s9(2)(a) **E** cassie.nicholson@pco.govt.nz
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Click to choose security classification.

Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata
Parliamentary Counsel Office

Briefing

Acting Attorney-General warrant

Date	Click to enter date.	Priority	Click to choose priority.
Security classification	Click to choose security classification.	Tracking number	YYYYMMDD-#

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Judith Collins KC Attorney-General	s9(2)(h) [redacted]	Click to enter **deadline** date.

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Cassie Nicholson	Chief Parliamentary Counsel	s9(2)(a) [redacted]	✓
[Author]	[Title]		
The following departments/agencies have been consulted			

Minister's office to complete:

- ☐ Approved
- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen
- ☐ See Minister's Notes
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Needs change
- ☐ Overtaken by Events
- ☐ Withdrawn

Comments

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Briefing

s9(2)(h)

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

s9(2)(h)

[redacted]

Cassie Nicholson
Chief Parliamentary Counsel
Date: Click to enter date.

Hon Judith Collins KC
Attorney-General
Date: / /

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From: Cameron Burrows
To: Nicola Purvis [DPMC]
Cc: Belinda Clarke [DPMC]
Subject: RE: For your decision: Acting Attorney-General for Gene Technology Bill
Date: Wednesday, 27 November 2024 5:31:04 pm
Attachments: image001.png

I am happy to agree this on his behalf.

Cam

Cameron Burrows
Chief of Staff
Office of Rt Hon Chris Luxon

s9(2)(a)

From: Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 27 November 2024 5:05 PM
To: Cameron Burrows <Cameron.Burrows@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Belinda Clarke [DPMC] <Belinda.Clarke@dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: For your decision: Acting Attorney-General for Gene Technology Bill

Hi Cam

As you might remember, Hon Goldsmith has been appointed the Acting Attorney-General to exercise all law officer functions in relation to specified significant policy initiatives in Hon Judith Collins KC's name.

"Specified significant policy initiatives" are identified by letter from Hon Collins to Hon Goldsmith, with the PM's consent (and should also be mentioned in all new policy papers that Hon Collins brings to Cabinet). Hon Collins would like the Gene Technology Bill to be such an initiative, ahead of it being considered by LEG on 5 December. (Hon Goldsmith will need to sign off on the Bill of Rights vet).

Would you like us to do a note to the PM for his weekend bag to seek his consent? Or is this something you could agree on his behalf?

Thanks
Nicola

Nicola Purvis (she/her)
Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet (Constitutional and Honours)
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

Direct dial: s9(2)(a) **Mobile:** +s9(2)(a)
Email: Nicola.purvis@dpmc.govt.nz

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From: Madeline Jones
To: Nicola Purvis [DPMC]
Cc: Belinda Clarke [DPMC]
Subject: RE: Acting Attorney-General - Bill of Rights advice
Date: Thursday, 28 November 2024 1:11:30 pm
Attachments: image001.jpg

Thank you so much for confirming that, Nicola.

I have asked MoJ to draft a response, and will send through to you both for review please if you do not mind?

Really appreciate your help with this!

Ngā mihi,
Maddie

From: Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 27 November 2024 7:13 PM
To: Madeline Jones <Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Belinda Clarke [DPMC] <Belinda.Clarke@dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Acting Attorney-General - Bill of Rights advice

You're welcome Maddie! PMO have confirmed consent on the PM's behalf to this arrangement so you can go ahead with sending the letter tomorrow. Belinda and I would be happy to review a draft if that would help.
Ngā mihi
Nicola

From: Madeline Jones <Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2024 5:40:14 PM
To: Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>
Cc: Belinda Clarke [DPMC] <Belinda.Clarke@dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Acting Attorney-General - Bill of Rights advice

Kia ora Nicola and Bel,

Thank you so much for all of your help today!

Ngā mihi nui,
Maddie

From: Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>

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From:	Nicola Purvis [DPMC]
To:	Madeline Jones
Cc:	Belinda Clarke [DPMC]
Subject:	RE: Gene Technology Bill - Letter from the Attorney to Acting Attorney-General
Date:	Friday, 29 November 2024 1:14:47 pm
Attachments:	image001.jpg 20241128 Gene Technology Bill Letter from AG to Hon Goldsmith.docx Letter to Hon Paul Goldsmith re Appointment as Acting AG.pdf

Kia ora Maddie

The letter looks good to me. My only comment is whether "from the date of this letter" should be added to the last sentence of the letter?

Ngā mihi
Nicola

From: Madeline Jones <Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, November 29, 2024 9:30 AM
To: Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>; Belinda Clarke [DPMC] <Belinda.Clarke@dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: Fwd: Gene Technology Bill - Letter from the Attorney to Acting Attorney-General

Good morning Nicola and Belinda,

Thank you so much for all of your help with this so far. I attach the draft letter from MoJ. Please let me know if you have any further thoughts.

Ngā mihi nui,
Maddie

From: Madeline Jones <Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, November 29, 2024 9:07 AM
To: Julie Johnston <Julie.Johnston@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Gene Technology Bill - Letter from the Attorney to Acting Attorney-General

Morning Julie,

Please see **attached** draft letter from the Attorney to the Acting Attorney-General. As previously discussed, this is regarding the transfer of all law officer functions in relation to the Gene Tech Bill. And has come about due to the need for the Acting Attorney-General to consider the BORA advice for the Gene Tech Bill.

Cab Office has confirmed that the PM has consented to this arrangement. They have also agreed to review a copy of the **attached** letter, but I wanted to send through to you first.

Please let me know if you have any questions at all.

Many thanks,

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Maddie

Madeline Jones
Private Secretary **(Attorney-General)** | Office of Hon Judith Collins MP KC

Attorney-General | Minister of Defence | Minister for Digitising Government
Minister Responsible for the GCSB | Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology | Minister for Space

s9(2)(a) | Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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Sent: Wednesday, 27 November 2024 10:59 AM
To: Madeline Jones <Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Belinda Clarke [DPMC] <Belinda.Clarke@dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Acting Attorney-General - Bill of Rights advice

Mōrena Maddie

In the PM's letter to Hon Goldsmith about his appointment as Acting Attorney-General, he said:

> *The specified significant policy initiatives and conflicts of interest that are covered by the proposed appointment should be identified by letter from the Attorney-General to the Acting Attorney-General, with my consent. In addition, Cabinet papers for new policy initiatives in Hon Collins' other portfolios should also identify if the proposals are sufficiently "significant" so as to trigger the requirement for the Acting Attorney-General to carry out the law officer functions.*

Do you know if the Cabinet paper mentioned the A-G role? As to the letter from Hon Collins to Hon Goldsmith, we are happy to help with this and seek the PM's/PMO's consent if you need. If you are happy to go ahead without us, could you copy us into the final letter?

Thanks
Nicola

From: Madeline Jones <Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2024 9:38 AM
To: Nicola Purvis [DPMC] <Nicola.Purvis@dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: Acting Attorney-General - Bill of Rights advice

Kia ora Nicola,

I was wondering about the process for initiating the acting warrant for the Acting Attorney-General?

There is a Bill of Rights advice for the Gene Technology Bill which is Hon Collins' Bill in her role as Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology. So, it will need to go to the Acting Attorney.

Feel free to give me a call anytime if you would prefer to discuss.

Ngā mihi nui,
Maddie

Madeline Jones
Private Secretary **(Attorney-General)** | Office of Hon Judith Collins MP KC

Attorney-General | Minister of Defence | Minister for Digitising Government

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Minister Responsible for the GCSB | Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology | Minister for Space

s9(2)(a) | Madeline.Jones@parliament.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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From:	Nicola Purvis [DPMC]
To:	EXT: Cassie Nicholson
Cc:	Rachel Hayward [DPMC]; Jessica Gorman [DPMC]
Subject:	Gene Technology Bill - Hon Goldsmith is now the Acting AG
Date:	Monday, 2 December 2024 2:37:56 pm
Attachments:	2024 12 02 to Minister Goldsmith.pdf image001.png

Kia ora Cassie

Just passing this on in case you hadn't seen it.

Ngā mihi
Nicola

Nicola Purvis (she/her)
Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet (Constitutional and Honours)
Cabinet Office, Executive Wing,
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

Direct dial: s9(2)(a) **Mobile:** s9(2)(a)
Email: Nicola.purvis@dpmc.govt.nz

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Office of Hon Judith Collins KC

Attorney General
Minister of Defence
Minister for Digitising Government
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology
Minister for Space

Hon Paul Goldsmith
Minister of Justice
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

02 DEC 2024

Dear Paul

Law officer functions in relation to the Gene Technology Bill

As you know, under the enclosed warrant appointing you as Acting Attorney-General, you are authorised to exercise all law officer functions of the Attorney-General in relation to specified significant policy initiatives in my name. Those functions include reporting to the House of Representatives on the consistency of any proposed legislation under s 7 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (the Bill of Rights Act).

In my role as Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, I am lead Minister for the Gene Technology Bill (the Bill). On 12 August 2024, Cabinet agreed the policy proposals and to issue drafting instructions for the Bill [CAB-24-MIN-0296]. The purpose of the Bill is to enable the safe use of gene technologies and regulated organisms by managing their risks to the health and safety of people and the environment.

The Bill is required to support the Government's coalition agreement commitments to enable the greater use of gene technologies that would provide benefits to New Zealand, specifically: ending the effective ban on genetic engineering (GE) and genetic modification (GM) in New Zealand and streamlining approvals for field trials and the use of non-GE/GM biotechnology.

This letter advises you that the Prime Minister has agreed that the Bill is a specified significant policy initiative and that the standing warrant appointing you as Acting Attorney-General is therefore engaged in respect of this Bill from the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Hon Judith Collins KC
Attorney-General

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RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON
PRIME MINISTER

29 APR 2024

Hon Paul Goldsmith
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Paul

Appointment as Acting Attorney-General (standing appointment)

I enclose a warrant under the hand of Her Excellency the Governor-General appointing you as the Acting Attorney-General. In this capacity, you are authorised to:

- exercise those law officer functions of the Attorney-General relating to the reclassification of special patients under the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1971 or the Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired Persons) Act 2003 and reporting to the House of Representatives on the consistency of proposed legislation under s 7 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, when the Attorney-General is overseas or otherwise temporarily unavailable; and

- exercise all law officer functions of the Attorney-General including reporting to the House of Representatives on the consistency of any proposed legislation under s 7 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and advising on rule of law considerations in relation to specified significant policy initiatives in the name of Hon Judith Collins and in relation to matters where Hon Judith Collins has a conflict of interest.

The specified significant policy initiatives and conflicts of interest that are covered by the proposed appointment should be identified by letter from the Attorney-General to the Acting Attorney-General, with my consent. In addition, Cabinet papers for new policy initiatives in Hon Collins' other portfolios should also identify if the proposals are sufficiently "significant" so as to trigger the requirement for the Acting Attorney-General to carry out the law officer functions.

This appointment is in addition to your existing ministerial responsibilities, including your Acting Attorney-General warrant relating to the fast-track consenting legislation.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon
Prime Minister

Copied to:
Attorney-General
Solicitor-General
Chief Executive, DPMC
Chief Executive, Ministry of Justice
Chief Parliamentary Counsel

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CHARLES THE THIRD, by the Grace of God King of New Zealand and His Other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

To Our Trusty and Well-beloved

The Honourable Paul Jonathan Goldsmith

GREETING!

We, having taken into Our Royal Consideration your Loyalty, Integrity, and Ability, are pleased to appoint and **DO HEREBY** appoint you, **Paul Jonathan Goldsmith**, to be Our

Acting Attorney-General

of New Zealand for the purpose of exercising those law officer functions of the Attorney-General relating to the reclassification of special patients under the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1971 or the Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired Persons) Act 2003 and reporting to the House of Representatives on the consistency of proposed legislation under s 7 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, when the Attorney-General is overseas or otherwise temporarily unavailable, and for the purpose of exercising all law officer functions of the Attorney-General including reporting to the House of Representatives on the consistency of any proposed legislation under s 7 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and advising on rule of law considerations in relation to specified significant policy initiatives in the name of Hon Judith Collins and in relation to matters where Hon Judith Collins has a conflict of interest: Provided always that you, the said Paul Jonathan Goldsmith, during such time as you shall hold the said Office, shall reside in New Zealand, and, if required to exercise the Attorney-General's responsibilities, you do so in person, except only in the case of sickness or other incapacity, and leave of absence first duly granted.

GIVEN, in Our name and on Our behalf

BY Our Trusty and Well-beloved The Right Honourable Dame Cindy Kiro, Chancellor and Principal Dame Grand Companion of Our New Zealand Order of Merit, Principal Companion of The Queen's Service Order, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over Our Realm of New Zealand.

AND issued under the Seal of New Zealand this 29 day of April in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty four in the second year of Our Reign.

Cindy Kiro

Governor-General

Released under the Official Information Act 1982