CABINET OFFICE

14 August 2026

[redacted]

Ref: OIA-2026/27-0049
Ref: OIA-2026/27-0094

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Official Information Act request: Copy of the Cabinet Manual 2023

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 20 July 2026. You requested:

> *"Just wondering if you can forward a copy of the Cabinet Manual 2023, per the OIA please?"*

On 31 July a further related request was received:

> "*Just wondering if you can forward a paper copy of Cabinet Manual 2023 paragraph 3.72; and the section on the no surprises principle please?"*

Response to your request

In response to your previous OIA request (reference OIA-2025/26-0858) I sent you a copy of the Cabinet Manual 2023 under cover of a letter dated 20 July 2026. I therefore consider your current request for a copy of the Cabinet Manual 2023 has been satisfied, but if you have not received the copy I sent, please let me know.

I have attached a copy of the sections of the Cabinet Manual you have requested.

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,

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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

3.72 Political neutrality requires officials to support the government of the day to develop and implement its policies and follow lawful instructions from Ministers to the best of their professional ability and irrespective of their own political opinions. Officials are expected to act in such a way that their agency maintains the confidence of its current Minister and of future Ministers. This principle is central to the public service's ability to serve the government of the day and any future government.

Ministers and officials

3.26 The style of the relationship and frequency of contact between Minister and agency will develop according to the Minister's personal preference. The following guidance may be helpful.

a. In their relationship with Ministers, officials should be guided by the “no surprises” principle. As a general rule, they should inform Ministers promptly of matters of significance within their portfolio responsibilities, particularly where these matters may be controversial or may become the subject of public debate. This principle does not override the requirements for disclosing information under the Privacy Act 2020 and the Official Information Act 1982 (or other statutory restrictions)