CABINET OFFICE

21 August 2026

[redacted]

Ref: OIA-2026/27-0060

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Official Information Act request: Relationship between warranted portfolios/ministerial portfolios and an appropriation minister

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

> *I am seeking clarification regarding the relationship between Warranted Portfolios/Ministerial Portfolios and the Minister Responsible for Appropriations. Given the scope of this request, we are sending this OIA to both DPMC and the Treasury.*
>
> *A: Warranted Portfolios/Ministerial Portfolios v Minister Responsible for Appropriations*
>
> *Question 1: Please confirm whether a 'Minister Responsible for Appropriations' (also called an appropriation minister) must also be a 'Warranted Minister'? Please answer this question by referring to any relevant law, Cabinet Office, Treasury or Public Service Commission guidance; any conventions, policies or administrative instructions that support this requirement or any other relevant source/s.*
>
> *Background: The PFA defines Minister as 'Minister means the Treasurer, or other Minister of the Crown who, under the authority of any warrant or with the authority of the Prime Minister, is for the time being responsible for the administration of this Act or particular provisions of this Act'. My understanding is that a Minister of the Crown must be a warranted Minister, however the statement 'with the authority of the Prime Minister' raises some doubt. See also Question 8 below.*
>
> *Question 2: Could you explain or direct me to an explanation that describes the purpose of a warrant for a Minister? Can you provide a sample copy of a warrant? We would like to understand whether it is a one-off hard copy document or a formal record (e.g. like a minute)? Our understanding is that the purpose of a warrant is to identify who has been entrusted with executive authority and who in Parliament can be held accountable for the exercise of that authority. Without that distinction, a warrant would risk becoming a*

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ceremonial rather than a constitutional instrument. Can you clarify?

Question 3: If the Prime Minister can make a non-warranted Minister an 'appropriation Minister', how does this work in practice? What authority permits such an arrangement? What checks and balances that are in place? Has this occurred in the past? Please provide examples since 2000. I am particular keen to know when this happened, what Prime Minister and non-warranted Minister was involved and why? See also Question 8 below.

Question 4: What systems do Treasury have in place to check that a Minister has the authority to become an 'appropriation Minister'? Does this check form part of the Budget process (e.g. review the Gazette or view a specific warrant)? Please explain the process?

Question 5: The Ministerial List, published by DPMC, separates Ministers that are warranted (Col 1) and those that are not (Col 2). The latest list (7 April) can be found here. It states in the notes:

Notes:
1. All Ministers are members of the Executive Council and are Cabinet Ministers unless otherwise indicated.
2. Warranted portfolios are listed in the left-hand column. Other responsibilities assigned by the Prime Minister are listed in the right-hand column. [bold added]

1. Can you explain the difference in powers and responsibilities between those that are warranted (col 1) and those that are non-warranted (col 2)?
2. Can the Prime Minister authorise the establishment of a 'Minister' without a warrant by the Governor-General? For example, the 'Minister for Child Poverty Reduction' sits in Col 2. If yes, please explain the process?
3. Can the Prime Minister authorise the establishment of an 'Associate Minister' without a warrant by the Governor-General? For example, the 'Associate Minister for National Security and Intelligence' sits in Col 2. If yes, please explain the process?
4. Is there such a term as non-warranted Ministers? Please explain the full range of possibilities that could fit in column 2 and how they are established and how they are removed. It must be more than an update of the Ministerial List?
5. Does a more formal record of removed Ministers exist? The Ministerial List does not include a record the removal of Ministers. Is the Gazette the only public record? Please explain.
6. Do you have a record of the number of non-warranted Ministers since the year 2000? Is the number increasing or decreasing? Please provide a copy of your records to answer this question.

B: Potential errors

Question 6: In reviewing the Budget 2026 (as at 28 May 2026) we note that Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet, includes the Minister for Emergency and Recovery? Is that correct? We thought it had moved to DIA. Please explain.

Question 7: In reviewing the Ministerial List (as at 7 April 2026), we note that the Minister for National Security and Intelligence is not listed as a Minister on

the Vote Security Intelligence or the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet? Is there another Vote that it appropriated funds? Please explain.

Question 8: In reviewing the Ministerial List (as at 7 April 2026), we note that the Coordination Minister for the 'Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions' is listed in Vote public sector as an appropriation minister (in Col 2). Please explain what a Coordination Minister is and whether they are warranted?

Question 9: We have identified what appear to be inconsistencies between the names and titles of Ministers, and in some cases the Ministers listed, in the Ministerial List maintained by DPMC and the 2026 Budget documentation published by the Treasury. We wondered whether these differences may simply reflect timing issues, given that the Ministerial List took effect on 7 April 2026 while Budget 2026 was presented on 28 May 2026. Please explain if there are other reasons for these differences?

C: Strategic overview

Question 10: Is there a framework/set of principles/protocol/diagram etc that guides the Prime Minister on ways to select (a) subject select committees, (b) warranted portfolios, (c) sectors and Votes, and/or (d) departments. We are aware of paras 2.3, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.10 in the 2023 Cabinet Manual (below), but is there any other guidance that we may be missing?

Question 11: Does DPMC and/or the Treasury have a preferred term for describing the portfolios assigned to Ministers of the Crown, namely Warranted Portfolios or Ministerial Portfolios? (a) Does DPMC and/or the Treasury use one of these terms in preference to the other? (b) Are the terms Warranted Portfolio and Ministerial Portfolio considered synonymous, or do they have different meanings? (c) If the terms have different meanings, please explain the distinction and provide any relevant guidance, conventions, policies or source documents that support this interpretation. Please provide any references in the Cabinet Manual, Cabinet Office guidance, Treasury guidance, DPMC publications, or other authoritative documents that define or describe these terms.

Response to your request

I believe that questions 4, 6, 7, 9, and part of questions 3 and 11 to the extent that they also request information from the Treasury are more closely related to the functions of the Treasury. Ordinarily I would transfer these parts to the Treasury under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act, but as I understand that Treasury has already received your request, I instead refer you to the Treasury's response.

DPMC does hold information in relation to questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, and 11. The answers to which are given below.

A: Warranted Portfolios/Ministerial Portfolios v Minister Responsible for Appropriations

Question 1:

All Ministers hold an Executive Council warrant. The Prime Minister then determines the ministerial portfolio system, including title and scope of each portfolio or other ministerial

responsibility. Portfolio appointments are made by warrant signed by the Governor-General, and the Prime Minister may also allocate other ministerial responsibilities by way of letter. In addition, they will all have at least one warranted portfolio and may also have one or more additional ministerial responsibilities that have been assigned to them by the Prime Minister by letter. See Cabinet Manual, chapter 2.
In the financial context, "appropriation Minister" is defined in section 2 of the Public Finance Act 1989; in relation to appropriations other than those administered by an Office of Parliament or a parliamentary agency (in which case the appropriation Minister is the Speaker), the appropriation Minister "means the Minister responsible for that appropriation". The origin of the Minister's responsibility may be their portfolio warrant, or a separate/additional authorisation by the Prime Minister. Note that the Public Finance Act also refers to "responsible Ministers", which is a different concept (i.e. they are responsible for the financial performance of the agencies in their portfolios). Treasury manages the Vote and appropriation arrangements. See Cabinet Manual, 2.24 – 2.27 on the financial responsibility of Ministers.
Further information is available on the Cabinet Office section of DPMC's website (including Directory of Ministerial Portfolios) – Ministers and their portfolios | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC).

Question 2:
See Cabinet Manual, chapter 2.

The warrant is the formal/legal document appointing a Minister to a particular portfolio. The Governor-General, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, signs the relevant portfolio warrant(s). These appointments are notified in the New Zealand Gazette and the individual Ministers and their portfolios/other ministerial responsibilities are listed in the Ministerial List (which is published on DPMC's website).
As explained at paragraph 2.21 of the Cabinet Manual, section 7 of the Constitution Act 1986 provides that any function, duty, or power of any Minister of the Crown may be performed by any member of the Executive Council (subject to a specific exception where the context requires otherwise). This means (among other things) that the Prime Minister can authorise a different Minister (i.e. other than the warranted portfolio Minister) to carry out particular functions and powers of a portfolio.
As noted above, all Ministers also hold an Executive Council warrant. This is explained at paragraphs 2.15-2.17 of the Cabinet Manual.
A copy of the template for Executive Council and portfolio warrants is attached.

Question 3:
This could be the case if the Prime Minister authorised a Minister who did not hold the portfolio warrant to be the "appropriation Minister" for a particular area. That may be possible via section 7 of the Constitution Act 1986 as explained above, as long as the context did not prevent it.
Treasury will answer this question re Public Finance Act and financial management requirements.

Question 4:
All appropriation Ministers are "Ministers of the Crown", as notified in the New Zealand Gazette and Ministerial List (see above).

Question 5:

The Prime Minister determines the portfolio structure. See Cabinet Manual, chapter 2.

1. Full warranted portfolios (on the left-hand side of the Ministerial List) are the main portfolios. Additional ministerial responsibilities (on the right-hand side of the Ministerial List) are usually less significant in size and content than warranted portfolio positions. Associate Minister appointments (via letter, on the right-hand side of the Ministerial List) are an example. The Associate Ministers (who also all hold at least one full warranted portfolio) assist the principal portfolio Minister in the particular portfolio and exercise any ministerial powers relating to that portfolio on behalf of the principal Minister (this is possible because of section 7 of the Constitution Act 1986, explained above).
2. All Ministers have at least one warranted portfolio (see above). Other responsibilities that are not warranted portfolios (on the right hand side of the Ministerial List) include Associate Ministers, Leader and Deputy Leader of the House, and other roles to signal that certain Ministers have overarching sectoral policy and delivery coordination roles across a number of other portfolios (e.g. Minister for Auckland), or Lead Minister responsibility for a significant initiative/work programme. This is a decision for the Prime Minister.
3. See 1 & 2 above. The roles on the right hand side of the list are decided by the Prime Minister and communicated to the relevant Ministers by letter. [The Governor-General is not involved in those decisions].
4. There is no such term as non-warranted Ministers. All Ministers have an Executive Council warrant and at least one portfolio warrant. Other responsibilities can be assigned by the Prime Minister, usually by letter.
5. All Ministerial or portfolio resignations and changes are authorised by the Prime Minister and notified via an updated Ministerial List and (in the case of warranted appointments) in the New Zealand Gazette.
6. As stated above all ministers are warranted therefore the Cabinet Office does not have a record of the number of “non-warranted ministers since the year 2000”. I therefore refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act. The practice over many years has been to have a Cabinet of approximately 20 Ministers, with a number of other Ministers outside Cabinet. On average, the total size of the Executive (ie Ministers both inside and outside Cabinet) has numbered in the mid- to late-20s. The Prime Minister determines the size of Cabinet and the overall Executive.

B: Potential errors

Question 6:
s14(b)(ii) – see Treasury response

Question 7:
s14(b)(ii) – see Treasury response

Question 8:
A Coordination Minister role is an “additional ministerial responsibility”, authorised by the Prime Minister by letter, with the scope of the role (as for all other Ministerial portfolios and responsibilities) determined by the Prime Minister.

Question 9:
s14(b)(ii) – see Treasury response

C: Strategic overview

Question 10:
The Cabinet Office provides advice to the Prime Minister on Ministerial appointments and portfolios – but it is the Prime Minister's decision on all such matters. Treasury provides advice on Votes and financial matters. The Public Service Commission provides advice on changes to departments/machinery of government changes (see more on publicservice.govt.nz. The Prime Minister does not have a role in selecting the membership of subject select committees; this is a matter for Parliament; see the Standing Orders.

Question 11:
DPMC generally uses these terms interchangeably. The Ministerial List provides the formal terminology for Ministerial appointments.
The Treasury will respond to this part of your request with their perspective.

Information being released
I have decided to release the documents listed below:

Item	Document Description/Subject
1.	Template for Executive Council Warrant
2.	Template for Portfolio Warrant

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

Executive Council warrant

KING 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 **[full name*]**

GREETING !

We, having taken into Our Royal Consideration your Loyalty, Integrity, and Ability, are pleased to appoint and DO HEREBY appoint you, to be a Member of the Executive Council of New Zealand: TO HAVE, hold, exercise, and enjoy the said Office for and during Our Pleasure and Will; together with all and singular the Rights, Profits, Privileges, and Advantages thereunto belonging or appertaining, in the most full and ample manner: Provided always that you, the said

[full name*]

during such time as you shall hold the said Office, shall reside in New Zealand, and execute the said Office of Member of the Executive Council in person, except only in the case of sickness or other incapacity, and leave of absence first duly granted.

GIVEN, in my name and on my 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 Our 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 [day] day of [month] in the year of Our Lord two thousand and [twenty-six] in the [fourth] year of Our Reign.

TIĀRE TE TUATORU, nā te huatau o te Atua, te Kīngi o Aotearoa me ērā atu o ōna whaitua, rohe hoki, te Upoko o te Kāhui Whenua, te Kaiwawao o te Whakapono

Ki tō mātau **[full name*]** Pono, e Kaha-arohanuitia ana

NGĀ MIHI !

Ko mātau, kua whaiwhakaaro ā-Ariki nei ki tō āhua Piripono, Ngākaupono, Kaha hoki, e harikoa ana ki te tohu, ā, HEI KONEI tohu i a koe, kia tū hei Mema o te Rūnanga Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa; KI TE MAU, ki te pupuri, ki te whakamahi i te Tari e kīia nei, kia eke ki tō mātau Pārekareka, Kaha hoki; tuia ki Ngā Tika, Ngā Hua, Ngā Painga me ngā Patanga e puritia ana, e hāngaitia ana, i runga i te āhua whānui, whai hua hoki: i ngā wā katoa kia tutuki i a koe

i te wā ka noho koe ki te Tari, ka noho ki Aotearoa, ā, ka ea ā-tinana nei i te Rūnanga Kāwanatanga, hāunga ngā wā e māuiui ana, i ngā wā rānei e kore e taea, ā, i ngā wā ka whakaaetia kia ngaro atu.

E WHAKAMANAHIA ANA i runga i tō Mātau ingoa, me tō Mātau mana

E te Hōnore Kahurangi Pono, e Kaha-Arohanuitia ana, arā a Kahurangi Cindy Kiro, te Tumuaki o Te Tohu Kairangi Matua o Aotearoa, o Te Tohu Hapori, te Kāwana-Tianara, me te Toihau-Matua ki roto, ki runga hoki i tēnei whenua o tātau, o Aotearoa.

Ā, e whakapuakina ana i raro i te Hīri o Aotearoa, i te *[rā rua tekau mā whitu o Nōema i te tau rua mano, rua tekau mā toru, arā te tau tuarua]* o tō Mātau Kīngitanga.

Governor-General | Kāwana-Tianara

[No honorific unless this has previously been granted for life]*

[portfolio warrant]

KING 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 [full name]

GREETING !

We, having taken into Our Royal Consideration your Loyalty, Integrity, and Ability, are pleased to appoint and DO HEREBY appoint you, **[full name, no honorific]**, to be Our

Minister [of/for xxx]

of New Zealand: TO HAVE, hold, exercise, and enjoy the said Office for and during Our Pleasure and Will; together with all and singular the Rights, Profits, Privileges, and Advantages thereunto belonging or appertaining, in the most full and ample manner: Provided always that you, the said **[full name, no honorific]** during such time as you shall hold the said Office, shall reside in New Zealand, and execute the said Office of **Minister [of/for xxx]** 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 Our 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 [xxx] day of [month] in the year of Our Lord two thousand and [twenty-six] in the [fourth] year of Our Reign.

TIĀRE TE TUATORU, nā te huatau o te Atua, te Kīngi o Aotearoa me ērā atu o ōna whaitua, rohe hoki, te Upoko o te Kāhui Whenua, te Kaiwawao o te Whakapono

Ki tō mātau
The Honourable [full name]
Pono, e Kaha-arohanuitia ana

NGĀ MIHI !

Ko mātau, kua whaiwhakaaro ā-Ariki nei ki tō āhua Piripono, Ngākaupono, Kaha hoki, e harikoa ana ki te tohu, ā, HEI KONEI tohu i a koe, **[full name, no honorific]**, hei

Minister [of/for xxx] mō mātau

O Aotearoa: KI TE MAU, ki te pupuri, ki te whakamahi i te Tari e kīia nei, kia eke ki tō mātau Pārekareka, Kaha hoki; tuia ki Ngā Tika, Ngā Hua, Ngā Painga me Ngā Patanga e puritia ana, e hāngaitia ana, i runga i te āhua whānui, whai hua hoki: i ngā wā katoa kia tutuki i a koe, te **[full name, no honorific]** i te wā ka noho koe ki te Tari, ka noho ki Aotearoa, ā, ka ea ā-tinana nei i Te Tari o **Minister [of/for xxx]**, hāunga ngā wā e māuiui ana, i ngā wā ka whakaaetia kia ngaro atu.

E WHAKAMANAHIA ANA i runga i tō Mātau ingoa, me tō Mātau mana

E te Hōnore Kahurangi Pono, e Kaha-Arohanuitia ana, arā a Kahurangi Cindy Kiro, te Tumuaki o Te Tohu Kairangi Matua o Aotearoa, o Te Tohu Hapori, te Kāwana-Tianara, me te Toihau-Matua ki roto, ki runga hoki i tēnei whenua o tātau, o Aotearoa.

Ā, e whakapuakina ana i raro i te Hīri o Aotearoa, i te *[rā rua tekau mā whā o Āperira i te tau rua mano, rua tekau mā whā, arā te tau tuarua]* o tō Mātau Kīngitanga.