

Hon Andrew Little

Minister of Defence
Minister for the Public Service
Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS
Minister Responsible for the GCSB
Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques



Mr Harris Leigh
fyi-request-21975-92c6b2aa@requests.fyi.org.nz

27 March 2023

Dear Mr Leigh

Official Information Request Reference MOIA 2023-0043

I refer to your official information request dated 2 March 2023 where you asked:

"Under the OIA I seek copies of any information you hold relating to the application of the Code of Conduct for Crown Entity Members (<https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/guidan...>) to the writings of the current Chair of the ACC.

I also seek any information held relating to comments by the ACC Chair such as:

"The previous National government had to deal with an unanticipated event of their own in the form of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. They got the books back in balance but at the cost of ignoring almost everything else." And "Labour is the battle-hardened team that can get the job done." <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politic...>

"In other words, if it is change voters want, they need look no further than the current Government." <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politic...>

"This is where Trump, Johnson, Morrison, and other assorted clowns come into play" [referring to conservative leaders of the USA, UK and Australia] <https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/30064184...>

I also seek any information you might hold on whether the preponderance of political comments by a Crown Entity board member may create an impression of political partisanship even if any one comment is excusable".

Response

As at the date of your request, I did not hold any information regarding the application of the Code of Conduct for Crown Entity Members in respect of the writings of the ACC Board Chair, Hon Steve Maharey. Accordingly, I have refused your request under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982 on the grounds that the information requested does not exist.

However, on 6 March 2023 I requested advice on the appropriateness of Mr Maharey's opinion pieces and any other similar public commentary by him, from the Public Service Commissioner (Commissioner) and asked what, if any, action might be taken.

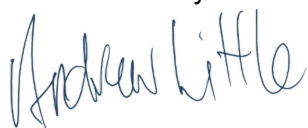
Please find outlined in the table below the advice I received from the Public Service Commissioner on 7 March 2023, which is publicly available on Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's website at the link provided in the table.

Date	Document Description	Website Address
7 March 2023	Political Neutrality Advice	https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/DirectoryFile/Political-Neutrality-Advice.pdf

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Christina Connolly @ Christina.Connolly@parliament.govt.nz

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Hon Andrew Little MP
Minister for the Public Service