



MP for Epsom
Deputy Prime Minister (from 31 May 2025)
Minister for Regulation
Associate Minister of Education (Partnership Schools)
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister of Health (Pharmac)
Associate Minister of Justice (Treaty Principles Bill)

02 SEP 2024

Alice Trendall
fyi-request-27575-44565b90@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: DSOIA175

Dear Alice

Thank you for your email of 11 July 2024 requesting the following information in relation to Country Kindy between the period of 1 March 2024 to 11 July 2024:

1. *Any documents, communications, correspondence, phone calls, emails, texts you had with Simon Laube.*
2. *Notes, records or recollections of any meetings you had with Simon Laube.*
3. *Advice your office received from officials in relation to Country Kindy.*
4. *Any notes, documents or recollections from when you "met with officials" on Monday 8 July.*

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Regarding **part one** of your request, I have identified one email chain from Simon Laube to me. This email includes an attachment consisting of a further email chain from Mr Laube to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) pertaining to the Early Childhood Council's (ECC) representations for Country Kindy, along with associated attachments and letters from Country Kindy and the community addressing the closure of this service.

I am releasing the email and letter from Mr Laube in part, with personal mobile numbers and other private information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons. These are attached as **Appendix A**

I am withholding the remaining attachments in full under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act, to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

Regarding **part two** of your request, there are no meetings between Mr Laube and myself in the timeframe you have set out. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

Regarding **part three** of your request, my office has identified one document in scope, being a Briefing Note containing advice that is being considered as part of a review being undertaken by the Ministry for Regulation, with a final report on this review being due at the end of the year. This advice is under active consideration until Cabinet has received the final report. I am therefore withholding this document in full under sections 9(2)(h) and 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, to maintain legal professional privilege, and to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

As required under section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered the public interest in releasing the information withheld. I do not consider the public interest considerations favouring the release of this information are sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold it at this time.

With regard to **part four** of your request, I can advise that there are no notes or documents relating to my meeting with officials on 8 July 2024. I am refusing these aspects under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. With regard to my recollections, there is nothing further outside those included in two published articles, which you can find here:

- <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/521584/manawatu-s-country-kindly-seeks-to-overturn-ministry-move-to-cancel-licence>
- <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/country-kindly-remain-open>.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Seymour', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Hon David Seymour
Associate Minister of Education