



4 October 2024

Ref: DOIA-REQ-0004398

Adrian Cowie

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Tēnā koe Adrian

Thank you for your request of 1 October 2024 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

For ease of reference, each question has been responded to in turn.

1. *The evidence that NZCRS has that Emily Walton is 'independent'.*

Ms Walton was nominated by the law society. Attached is a copy of this nomination. Please note, some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

2. *The register of interests and disclosure of conflicts of interest that Emily Walton completed in her role in the NZCRS.*

MBIE is refusing this question under 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is publicly available, and is disclosed in the published meeting minutes, linked here: <https://www.nzcrs.govt.nz/about-us/advisory-groups/legal-advisory-group/previous-meeting-minutes/5-march-2024/>

3. *The conflict of interest assessment that NZCRS completed for Emily Walton in her position as "Independent Lawyer", noting she is also a Director of a structural engineering firm that appears to work for NZCRS and the Natural Hazards Commission.*

Batchelar McDougall Consulting (BMC) does not work for New Zealand Claims Resolution Service (NZCRS) and has never been engaged by NZCRS to carry out any work. NZCRS does not engage engineers to carry out work, any engineering advice is provided by Engineering New Zealand. Ms Walton was nominated by the Law Society in May 2023, and NZCRS relied on this nomination.

4. *The conflict of interest records that NZCRS have for Emily Walton in her involvement with NZCRS.*

MBIE is refusing this question under 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is publicly available in the meeting minutes via the link provided above.

5. *A copy of the engagement letter and fees details for Emily Walton's involvement with the NZCRS. This should include the amount she is paid, including all invoices covering all her involvement with the NZCRS.*

Please find attached a copy of Ms Walton's engagement letter. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

6. *A full listing and description of the fees paid to Emily Walton, including a description of what this was for, and dates, for the period that she has been involved with the NZCRS (including the previous name: the Greater Christchurch Claims Resolution Service (GCCRS)).*

Ms Walton has only been paid to attend meetings as per her contract.

7. *A copy of the engagement letter and other engagement information, short form agreement, and fees details for Batchelar McDougall Consulting Limited's work for NZCRS, including that of Edward Hill, or Ed Hill, structural engineer. This should include the amount paid to Batchelar McDougall Consulting Limited, their hourly rate, and copies of invoices for all of their involvement with NZCRS.*

NZCRS has never engaged BMC.

8. *A copy of all meeting agenda, meeting minutes, aide memoire, discussions, filenotes, letters, emails, phone recordings, phone calls, between NZCRS and insurers and their PMO's and consultants regarding Emily Walton and her involvement with the NZCRS. This should include, but not be limited to, the Natural Hazards Commission, Southern Response Earthquake Services Limited, Insurance Council of New Zealand.*

NZCRS has never discussed Ms Walton's involvement with Insurers or their PMO's and consultants.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I do not consider that the withholding of this information is outweighed by public interest considerations in making the information available.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, or if you require any further assistance, please contact [OIA@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@mbie.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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Darren Wright  
**Director, NZCRS**  
Building and Tenancy