



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)

20 DEC 2024

Naomi Priestly

fyi-request-29174-393effea@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Naomi

## Official Information Act request: Treaty Principles Bill

Thank you for your email of 13 November 2024 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information relating to the Treaty Principles Bill (the Bill). Specifically, you wrote:

*I am requesting the following information related to the Treaty Principles Bill:*

- 1. Expenditure Information: As of today - 13 November 2024 - The total amount of taxpayer money spent to date in relation to the development, drafting, and associated processes for the Treaty Principles Bill. This request includes all costs incurred for consultations, legal advice, research, staff time, and any other directly associated expenditures.*
  - ↳ If an exact total cost is not readily available, please provide a detailed estimate based on the costs reasonably associated with the development, drafting, and consultation process for the Treaty Principles Bill.*
- 2. Consultation Details: A list of experts, advisors and stakeholders consulted during the formation of the Treaty Principles Bill. This includes names, roles, or specialisations, dates of consultation, and a brief description of each expert's contribution or area of input.*
  - ↳ If privacy concerns arise regarding the disclosure of individual names, please provide the organisation or professional affiliation of each expert, if applicable. If an expert is unaffiliated and acting as an independent member of the public, please clearly state this where applicable in the response.*

*For the purpose of this request, 'consultation' refers to two-way communications or discussions where an expert provided input on the Treaty Principles Bill and received direct responses from Hon. David Seymour or his office. This excludes general correspondence or unsolicited communications that did not receive a substantive response.*

In response to part 1 of your request, I am advised that the only specific costs recorded for the development of the Bill, as of 13 November 2024, is for a Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) - hosted discussion session with treaty experts/practitioners related to the wording of the

principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, that occurred on 19 August 2024. The Ministry's recorded costs for this discussion session are \$5,033.19.

No further specific costs have been recorded for the development of this Bill. This is because any associated policy work is undertaken within the baseline funding of the government agencies involved, which in this case, is the Ministry. This means that costs are absorbed as part of the Ministry's normal operating budgets rather than being tracked separately.

You have also asked that if an exact cost is not readily available, that an estimate is provided. To answer this part of your request, the Ministry would need to create new information. While the Act allows New Zealanders to ask government agencies for information, there is no requirement to create new information or compile information they do not hold. Therefore, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act.

I note that you have defined 'consultation' as any 'two-way communications or discussions where an expert provided input on the Treaty Principles Bill and received direct responses from [me] or [my] office.' I have therefore interpreted part 2 of your request to be asking for information on any consultation with experts undertaken by me or my Office to inform the development of the Bill.

In response to this part of your request, I can advise that no formal consultation fitting this definition has occurred either by me or my Office. While I have received general correspondence from the public relating to the Bill, it has not informed any policy work. In addition, the 'discussion session' referred to in response to part 1 of your request was a Ministry of Justice-hosted session that did not receive a direct response from either me or my Office. I am, therefore, also refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by phone on 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

Hon David Seymour

**Associate Minister of Justice (Treaty Principles Bill)**