

19 March 2026

Liam Hehir  
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Our ref: OIA 130056

Tēnā koe Liam

### **Official Information Act request: Law Commission President in 2005**

Thank you for your email of 15 February 2026 to the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry), requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), regarding the appointment of the President of the Law Commission in 2005. Specifically, you requested:

*Under the Official Information Act 1982, I request documents held by the ministry that answer the following question:*

*Was Sir Geoffrey Palmer the only person considered for appointment as President of the Law Commission in 2005 (appointment effective 1 December 2005)?*

*For the avoidance of doubt, please provide any document(s) that record, state or indicate one or more of the following:*

*Whether any other candidate or potential candidate was identified, approached, sounded out, assessed, recommended or put forward for the role (whether informally or formally)*

*Whether the Minister and or Cabinet were advised that Palmer was the only person being considered, or that there were no alternative candidates*

*Any note, briefing, email or submission that records the options considered for the appointment or the process used to identify candidates*

*I do not seek the identity of any other person. Any personal information may be redacted. I seek only confirmation of whether the appointment was rival-free, and the basis on which that conclusion is recorded.*

*To reduce compliance burden, I do not require background material unrelated to candidate consideration (eg general descriptions of the Law Commission's functions), nor copies of publicly available documents such as the Gazette notice. Please provide only the minimum material necessary to answer the question above.*

*If the Ministry holds no documents that speak to whether other candidates were considered, please confirm that fact.*

On 12 March 2026, the Ministry extended the time frame to respond to your request in line with section 15A(1)(b) of the Act, as consultations necessary to make a decision on your request were such that a response could not be made within the original time limit. You were advised that you could expect a response no later than 27 March 2026.

In response to your request, the Ministry has found one paper in scope, the Memorandum for Cabinet: Appointment of President of the Law Commission. This is attached and released to you in full.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: [Official Information Act responses | New Zealand Ministry of Justice](#).

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28 of the Act. The Office of the Ombudsman may be contacted by phone on: 0800 802 602, by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz), or via the webform: [Make a complaint \(for members of the public\) | Ombudsman New Zealand](#).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Newall', with a horizontal line underneath.

Wayne Newall  
**Manager, Appointments and Specialist Function**