



MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	[PROACTIVE] Investigation into regulatory services subcontractor
Date	19 June 2025
Briefing number	BRI-3365

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone	1 st contact
Brent Alderton	Director of Land Transport and Group General Manager Regulatory	s9(2)(a)	s9(2)(a)	✓

Action taken by Office of the Minister

- Noted
- Seen by Minister
- Agreed
- Feedback provided
- Forwarded to
- Needs change [please specify]
- Withdrawn
- Overtaken by events

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

19 June 2025

Hon Chris Bishop – Minister of Transport

[PROACTIVE] Investigation into regulatory services subcontractor

Purpose

1. This briefing informs you of actions taken in response to allegations of bribery involving driving testing officers (DTOs) employed at a single location. The location is being kept confidential at this stage due to ongoing investigation and employment processes.
2. The DTOs allegedly involved, work for an organisation that NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) contracts to provide a range of driver licensing services, including driver licence testing.

Background

3. NZTA contracts out its driver licensing services, including testing, to external providers.
4. On 14 February 2025, NZTA alerted one of its providers of what we considered a high risk that DTOs at one of the provider sites were soliciting and/or accepting bribes to pass practical driver licensing tests.

Investigation findings and progress

5. The provider undertook a review-based approach to investigating the allegations, predominantly focused on the assessment of policies and processes in place and provided this to NZTA.
6. NZTA subsequently met with the provider to clarify requirements and direct a more investigative approach.
7. The provider commenced this in late April 2025.
8. Shortly after commencement of the investigation, the provider and NZTA received further complaints and allegations regarding bribery at the same location.
9. Because of the specificity of the complaints, five DTOs at the site were suspended from duties. The suspension remains in place and the provider has written to the DTOs advising them that the provider has filed a report with NZ Police.
10. The provider has initiated disciplinary proceedings against the five DTOs.
11. An allegation involving a sixth DTO at the same location was received on 9 May 2025. This additional allegation is under investigation by the provider and NZTA will be updated at a meeting scheduled for Monday, 23 June 2025.

12. NZTA is investigating options for rectification of the testing. This may include some people needing to re-sit their test.

13. NZTA is currently assessing other allegations, trends and anomalies and will investigate s 6(c)

Next steps

14. NZTA will update you as needed.

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the content of this briefing



.....
Brent Alderton

Director of Land Transport and Group General Manager Regulatory

.....
Hon Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport

Date: 2025

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MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	[PROACTIVE] Investigations into fraud, bribery and corruption
Date	8 July 2025
Briefing number	BRI-3380

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone	1st contact
Brent Alderton	Director of Land Transport and Group General Manager Regulatory	s9(2)(a)	s9(2)(a)	✓

Action taken by Office of the Minister

- Noted**
- Seen by Minister**
- Agreed**
- Feedback provided**
- Forwarded to**
- Needs change [please specify]**
- Withdrawn**
- Overtaken by events**

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

8 July 2025

Hon Chris Bishop – Minister of Transport

INVESTIGATIONS INTO FRAUD, BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

Purpose

1. This briefing provides an update on actions related to allegations of bribery involving Driver Testing Officers (DTOs), following the previous briefing you received on 19 June 2025 (Ref: BRI-3365). s6(c)

Background

2. s6(c)
3. s6(c)
4. As noted in BRI-3365, we are actively assessing these allegations, along with trends and anomalies that may indicate potential fraud or bribery within the system.
5. In response to additional data anomalies identified, a dedicated regulatory fraud taskforce has been established to ensure a coordinated approach to investigating and reporting any necessary rectification.

Update on allegations of bribery involving DTOs

6. We previously advised you of actions being taken in response to allegations of bribery involving DTOs employed at a single location, including the potential rectification.
7. The DTOs are employed by an organisation contracted by us to deliver driver licensing services.
8. The DTOs employer has cleared one of the 6 DTOs following a brief internal process, which concluded there was no misconduct.
9. Based on the information provided to us, we expect the other 5 DTOs to be dismissed from employment.
10. We are following a process to remove all appropriate NZTA endorsements and licences from the 5 DTOs.
11. We also expect to require 769 individuals to undertake an on-road safety assessment (to check that they have a good knowledge of the road rules and are practicing safe driving skills). Depending on the outcome, some may be required to re-sit their test.

12. We anticipate that the DTOs employer will bear the costs associated with this rectification process. This will be confirmed following the conclusion of our discussions with the DTO's employer later this month.

s6(c)



Next steps

17. We will update you as appropriate.

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the content of this briefing

Brent Alderton

.....
Brent Alderton

Director of Land Transport and Group General Manager Regulatory

.....
Hon Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport

Date: 2025

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MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	[PROACTIVE] Update on Investigations into Irregularities and Integrity Matters
Date	20 August 2025
Briefing number	BRI-3408

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone	1 st contact
Mike Hargreaves	Director of Land Transport (Acting)	s 9(2)(a)		✓

Action taken by Office of the Minister

- Noted
- Seen by Minister
- Agreed
- Feedback provided
- Forwarded to
- Needs change [please specify]
- Withdrawn
- Overtaken by events

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20 August 2025

Hon Chris Bishop – Minister of Transport

UPDATE ON INVESTIGATIONS INTO IRREGULARITIES AND INTEGRITY MATTERS

Purpose

1. This briefing provides further update on actions related to allegations of fraud, including bribery s 6(c) involving participants in the land transport system. This follows the previous briefings you received on 19 June and 8 July 2025 (Ref: BRI-3365 and BRI-3380, respectively).

Background

2. s 6(c) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
3. We are actively investigating these allegations and monitoring patterns and irregularities that may indicate potential fraud or bribery within the system. s 6(c) [redacted]
[redacted]

Progress on issues previously advised in BRI-3380

4. We previously advised you of actions being taken in response to allegations of bribery involving Driver Testing Officers (DTOs) employed at a single location, including the potential rectification of affected drivers. The DTOs are employed by an organisation contracted by us to deliver driver licensing services.
 5. Five DTOs at a single location have been dismissed. We are following a process to remove all appropriate NZTA endorsements and licences from the five DTOs.
 6. Preparation is underway for rectification involving the first subset of individuals identified as being at highest risk for having paid a bribe (approximately 400 people). These individuals are likely to be contacted by the end of August 2025 and will be required to undertake an on-road safety assessment.
 7. s 6(c) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
- [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

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s 6(c)



Next steps

- 14. We will update you as appropriate.

It is recommended that you:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Note the content of this briefing | Yes / No |
|---|-----------------|

.....
Mike Hargreaves
 Director of Land Transport (Acting)

.....
Hon Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport
 Date: 2025

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Regulatory Updates

Update on fraud activity

We have previously advised you of suspected bribery at a VTNZ site in Auckland.

VTNZ investigated 5 VTNZ Driver Testing Officers (DTOs) at their Highbrook site in Auckland for bribery, and they have all been dismissed. NZTA suspended their Testing Officer (O)-endorsements and issued Notices of Proposals to revoke them. Final decisions will be made later this month.

VTNZ will stop offering driver licencing tests at its Highbrook site for 6months from 19 September 2025. NZTA supports this decision.

VTNZ Highbrook will remain open and continue offering other services, such as Warrants of Fitness (WoF) and Certificate of Fitness (CoF). Driver licence testing capacity at nearby VTNZ sites will be increased.

In the week of 15 September 2025, NZTA is contacting 332 people who received a driver licence test from VTNZ Highbrook. We will ask 248 class 1 licence holders to sit an On-Road Safety Test (ORST) and 84 holders of heavy 2 – 5 licences to sit a practical test in the appropriate class. These individuals won't have to pay for the test.

Systems and processes, monitoring, and reporting have been enhanced at other VTNZ sites to ensure that any fraudulent activity is quickly identified and addressed.

Out of scope

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Out of scope

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VTNZ Highbrook – NZTA Response to Bribery Allegations

Bribery allegations involving Driver Testing Officers at VTNZ Highbrook have received considerable media attention over the past week. s6(c)

s6(c)

The NZ Police Counties-Manukau Financial Crimes Unit is actively investigating the VTNZ Highbrook case. We will continue to work with NZ Police closely to support their investigations.

From: [Prisca Gain](#)
To: [Mark Nicholson](#); [Official Correspondence](#); [Josh Driscoll](#)
Subject: Re: Regulatory content for Minister's report WE 12 September
Date: Tuesday, 16 September 2025 12:07:01 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Thanks Mark, I talked to Andy and he will send this to you 😊

Ngā mihi nui

Prisca

Prisca Gain (she/her)

Executive Advisor

Te Waka Kōtuia - Engagement and Partnerships

Email: [x@xx](#)

Phone: [s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

Mobile: [s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

From: Mark Nicholson <[x@xx](#)>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 10:38:02 AM
To: Official Correspondence <[x@xx](#)>; Josh Driscoll <[x@xx](#)>
Cc: Prisca Gain <[x@xx](#)>
Subject: RE: Regulatory content for Minister's report WE 12 September

Noted and thank you. If the team could get an early copy of the PR to the office that would be great.

Cheers

Mark

From: Official Correspondence <[x@xx](#)>
Sent: Tuesday, 16 September 2025 10:33 AM
To: Josh Driscoll <[x@xx](#)>; Mark Nicholson <[x@xx](#)>
Cc: Prisca Gain <[x@xx](#)>
Subject: Regulatory content for Minister's report WE 12 September

Kia ora Mark and Josh

We would like to update you that we're looking to issue a media release with regard to the fraud activity at Highbrook VTNZ tomorrow, Wednesday 17 September 2025.

We will also include the below in the Minister's weekly report so the Minister can note.

Update on fraud activity

We have previously advised you of suspected bribery at a VTNZ site in Auckland.

VTNZ investigated 5 VTNZ Driver Testing Officers (DTOs) at their Highbrook site in Auckland for bribery, and they have all been dismissed. NZTA has suspended their Testing Officer (O)-endorsements and issued Notices of Proposals to revoke them. Final decisions will be made later this month.

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VTNZ Highbrook will remain open and continue offering other services, such as Warrants of Fitness (WoF) and Certificate of Fitness (CoF). Driver licence testing capacity at nearby VTNZ sites will be increased.

In the week of 15 September 2025, NZTA is contacting 332 people who received a driver licence test from VTNZ Highbrook. We will ask 248 class 1 licence holders to sit an On-Road Safety Test (ORST) and 84 holders of heavy 2 – 5 licences to sit a practical test in the appropriate class. These individuals won't have to pay for the test. NZTA issued a media release on Wednesday 17 September 2025 to update the public about this.

Systems and processes, monitoring, and reporting have been enhanced at other VTNZ sites to ensure that any fraudulent activity is quickly identified and addressed.

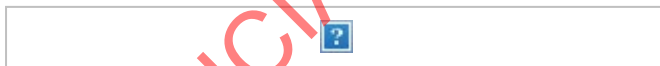
Ngā mihi
Chanell

Ministerial Services

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From: [Mark Nicholson](#)
To: [Mikaela Bossley Clark](#); [Tegan Harris](#)
Cc: [Josh Driscoll](#)
Subject: FW: Driver testing PR
Date: Tuesday, 16 September 2025 12:16:40 pm
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)
[image016.png](#)
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[image018.png](#)
[image019.png](#)
[image020.png](#)
[image021.png](#)

Hi Team

Just an FYI on this one – follows a verbal update I gave last week on potential next steps.

This PR is likely to go out tomorrow. Operational for the Agency, and office has continued to be informed through the process.

Any issues, please let me know.

Cheers

Mark

From: Andy Knackstedt <Andrew.Knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 16 September 2025 12:12 PM
To: Mark Nicholson <Mark.Nicholson@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Prisca Gain <Priscilia.Gain@nzta.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Driver testing PR

Hi Mark,

Here's the PR we're looking to get out tomorrow – still need to run past Brent Alderton and give CE's office a heads up.

Cheers,

Andy

 **Media release**

17 September 2025





VTNZ Highbrook to stop driver licence testing following bribery investigation

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) is requiring 322 people to re-sit practical driving tests following investigations which confirmed serious misconduct involving five Driver Testing Officers (DTOs) at the Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ) Highbrook branch in Auckland.

Investigations undertaken by VTNZ and NZTA this year revealed that the DTOs had been accepting bribes to pass people taking practical driver tests since 2023.

The five DTOs have been dismissed by VTNZ, their Testing Officer endorsements have been suspended by NZTA, and the fraudulent activity has been referred to Police for investigation.

VTNZ will cease offering practical driver licence testing at its Highbrook branch from this Friday (19 September).

NZTA National Manager Road Safety Regulation Brett Aldridge says the type of fraudulent activity undertaken by these individual DTOs undermines the integrity of the driver licensing system, and it potentially allows unsafe drivers who have been poorly tested – or not tested at all - onto our roads.

“We expect our agents to act quickly to address issues when they receive serious complaints, and to inform NZTA of their actions. VTNZ has acted swiftly to address the issues identified in this case, and we support the actions they have taken.

“NZTA takes its responsibility for road safety very seriously. We are contacting the people who were tested by these DTOs and received a driver licence during the period where fraud was suspected and requiring them to pass an on-road driving test, at no cost to them, to confirm that they have the necessary skills to continue to hold a licence.

“We understand that this action may come as a surprise to some of these licence holders, however we need to keep our roads safe for everyone. Road safety is at the heart of this action,” Mr Aldridge says.

Members of the public scheduled to take a driver licence test at VTNZ’s Highbrook site in Auckland will be redirected to nearby VTNZ sites. The Highbrook site remains open for other services, including WoF and CoF inspections.

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- Twitter: twitter.com/nztamain
- Journey planner: journeys.nzta.govt.nz
- Phone: 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 44 44 49)

For more information please contact:

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