

# Hon Paul Goldsmith

Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage  
Minister of Justice  
Minister for Media and Communications  
Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations



25 MAR 2026

Lance Lavery  
fyi-request-34091-c67b2da2@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Lance

## Official Information Act request: English Language Bill

I refer to your email of 15 March 2026 requesting information, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), regarding the English Language Bill (the Bill).

Your request was transferred to my office on 18 March 2026 from the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry). Specifically, you requested:

*The proactive release published on 17 February 2026 by the Minister of Justice contains seven documents relating to this Bill. Multiple passages have been withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials. I request the release of the specific redacted material identified below.*

*From Document 1 — "Declaring English an Official Language" (Cabinet paper, Minister of Justice):*

- 1. The content of paragraph 20, withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv), within the Legislative Implications section.*
- 2. The content of recommendation 4, withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv).*

*From Document 2 — CBC-25-MIN-0029 (Cabinet Business Committee minute, 30 June 2025):*

- 3. The content of paragraph 4, withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv).*

*From Document 4 — "English Language Bill: Approval for introduction" (Cabinet paper, Minister of Justice):*

- 4. The content of recommendation 1, withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv).*

*From Document 5 — LEG-25-MIN-0155 (Cabinet Legislation Committee minute, 14 August 2025):*

- 5. The content of paragraph 1, withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv).*

*From Document 7 — "Draft Cabinet paper: Declaring English an Official Language" (Briefing to Minister of Justice, 11 June 2025):*

- 6. All content withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv), including but not limited to the redacted passage at paragraph 26 and any redacted content in annexed material.*

I note that you have asked that your request be responded to under urgency as public submissions on the Bill close on 27 March 2026.

In response to your request, I can advise that the information you have requested continues to be withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the constitutional conventions that protect confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials.

The content relates to Cabinet legislative programme prioritisations. It is necessary to withhold such information to continue to protect the orderly and effective conduct of Government decision making processes.

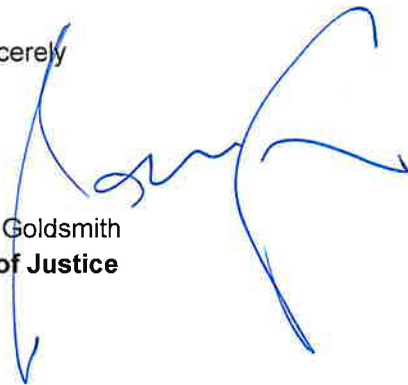
I can advise that the redacted information is not considered necessary for understanding or submitting on the English Language Bill.

The public interest has been assessed and is not considered to override the need to withhold the information.

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 Paul Goldsmith  
**Minister of Justice**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Paul Goldsmith', written over a large, faint watermark of the same signature.