

# Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance  
Minister for Economic Growth  
Minister for Social Investment



12 JUN 2026

John Luke  
fyi-request-34691-53f9fb01@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear John

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request, received on 13 May 2026. You requested:

*I noted, Appointment to the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake*

[https://urldefense.com/v3/ https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2026-go2544 !!Asg5-8xVch3Req!pKU-ljeCB7Ro7D4KB-nkAqRZfoRSb7tRrdNX75vthZ3-IRVwHxIRSGQhgqnLjuEanEAefJcy9qIJUWBDluOkTIKh1qVkc4BSeSpHGxLKiPwG\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2026-go2544!!Asg5-8xVch3Req!pKU-ljeCB7Ro7D4KB-nkAqRZfoRSb7tRrdNX75vthZ3-IRVwHxIRSGQhgqnLjuEanEAefJcy9qIJUWBDluOkTIKh1qVkc4BSeSpHGxLKiPwG$)

*May I ask how you called for public nomination and on what platform you have call for public nominations e.g. govt.jobs website. A copy of your ad as well and pay rate. Also, how many applications you have received for each of the role from the public and how many you have received from other nominating agencies such as TPK or Ministry of women etc for your role. How many you have shortlisted and how many you have interviewed.*

*Also, can I request to view the appointment letter if there is one sent to the Alastair Charles Hercus. I am happy for you to remove any relevant personal information.*

*Besides meeting fees, do they receive any other benefits, such as expense reimbursement (If so, may I request to view your expense reimbursement policy in relation to your board member), a laptop, ID card, phone, or similar provisions?*

On 25 May 2026 the last part of your request for information regarding 'expense reimbursement and any other benefits' was transferred to the Natural Hazards Commission for reply.

## Information being released

In early 2026, I received advice from the Treasury recommending the elevation of incumbent member Alastair Hercus to the position of Deputy Chair for the Board of the National Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake (NHC), effective from 1 May 2026 for the remainder of his term. This recommendation was made as part of the early 2026 appointment round for the NHC Board.

As this was a mid-term elevation of an existing board member, there was no public call for nominations initiated and no advertisement placed for the Deputy Chair position. I subsequently agreed to the Treasury's recommendation to elevate Mr Hercus to the Deputy Chair role. Attached is a copy of the appointment letter sent to Mr Hercus, with personal information redacted as requested.

The fees for the Deputy Chair role are set at \$76,165 per annum.

Please find enclosed the following documents:

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1.	24 April 2026	26.04 NHC Alastair Hercus Elevation to DC Letter	Release in part

I have decided to release the document listed above, subject to information being withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA.

This reply addresses the information you requested. Under section 28(3) of OIA, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Hon Nicola Willis  
**Minister of Finance**

# Table of Contents

---

1.	<a href="#">26.04 NHC Alastair Hercus Elevation to DC Letter</a>	1
----	--	---

## Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance  
Minister for Economic Growth  
Minister for Social Investment



Mr Alastair Hercus

s9(2)(a)

Dear Mr Hercus

I have pleasure in formally offering you appointment as Deputy Chair of the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake (NHC) Board from 1 May 2026, for the remainder of your current term to 30 June 2028.

The appointment is made under sections 28-35 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 and Natural Hazards Insurance Act 2023, and is on the basis that you:

- have consented in writing to being a board member
- have certified that you are not disqualified from being a board member
- have disclosed the nature and extent (including monetary value, if quantifiable) of all interests that you have, or are likely to have, in matters relating to the Commission.

If at any time after your appointment you become disqualified from holding office as a member you must inform me immediately. A list of the persons who are disqualified from holding office as a member is set out in section 30 of the Crown Entities Act 2004. The appointment is also subject to the satisfactory completion of background checks.

Please note that you will hold office at the pleasure of the Minister, and that you may be removed as a member at any time, and for any reason, by written notice from the Minister to the entity.

On taking up this appointment you will ensure that you are appropriately indemnified and insured by the entity. You could discuss this with the entity's management. You are welcome to take out additional insurance at your own cost if you wish.

You will be aware that responsibilities placed upon board members have increased in recent years and are still subject to significant change from time to time. If you have not already done so, I strongly recommend that you make yourself familiar with the legal rights and obligations of board members. A key element of your obligation is the need for confidentiality with regard to the board and board committee discussions.

Schedule 1 to this letter sets out the Minister's expectations in regard to the avoidance of conflict of interest situations by members of Crown entities.

Please ensure that you have familiarised yourself with the Code of Conduct for Crown Entity Board Members, available on the [Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission website](#), which sets out minimum standards of integrity and conduct you are expected to follow.

The code reinforces the requirement of political neutrality which requires all Crown entity board members to act in a politically impartial manner, irrespective of their political interests. Consistent adherence to this code is critical to ensure that Crown boards and board members conduct themselves in a way that maintains public trust and confidence.

It is also possible that you may be placed in a situation where, as a result of circumstances which are not related to your directorship of this particular entity, your continuing to act as a member of this entity might nevertheless place this entity or the Minister in a difficult position.

Consistent with your duty to act in the best of the entity, if you find yourself in such a situation you must take the initiative and raise the matter with the Chair, or the Treasury. While there are no set criteria for such situations, examples include:

- where legal proceedings have been, or are likely to be, brought against the member
- where the member has been, or is likely to be, subject to negative media or public scrutiny
- where the member is placed in a situation of actual or perceived conflict of interest
- any issue affecting the member's ability to contribute to the board (for example, as a result of other time pressures, extended overseas travel (ie more than two months, illness, etc)
- where the member is appointed to any position as an employee of the Crown, or intends to undertake significant contract work for any Crown entity
- any other similar circumstance which may place the entity or Ministers in a difficult or embarrassing position.

I also expect you to familiarise yourself with the contents of the Owner's Expectations document which outlines Ministers' expectations of the companies fully or partially owned by the Crown. The manual and related guides are at:

<https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/guide/owners-expectations-manual>.

I congratulate you on this appointment and look forward to your ongoing contribution. If you wish to accept the appointment, please sign and return the "Agreement to Accept Appointment" form copying in the addresses listed in the document.

Yours sincerely

Hon Nicola Willis  
**Minister of Finance**

*Crown Entity Board Members - Management of Conflicts of Interest - Schedule 1  
Agreement to Accept Appointment*

cc: [appointments@treasury.govt.nz](mailto:appointments@treasury.govt.nz)

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

*Crown Entity Board Members - Management of Conflicts of Interest - Schedule 1*

It is necessary that new appointees to Crown entity boards be advised of the expectations of the Minister with regard to the management of conflicts of interest that may arise in the course of their term.

Board members occupy a fiduciary position, which requires them to act bona fide in what the board member considers is in the best interests of the entity. Accordingly, board members are required not to place themselves in a position of a conflict of interest other than to the extent allowed under the Crown Entities Act 2004.

It is expected that all board members make themselves familiar with their obligations under the Crown Entities Act 2004. Nothing in this statement obviates any board member responsibility in this regard. However, it is important that appointees are aware of the additional expectations of the Minister with regards to conflicts of interests.

The Minister expects that no member of the Board or its subsidiaries will undertake work for the NHC. This expectation is not intended to preclude a board member from undertaking assignments for the Board which properly fall within the definition of a board member's duties, but would preclude the board member carrying out, say, a consulting assignment for the management of the NHC.

The Minister also expects that board members of the NHC should not be placed in a conflict of interest through the involvement of an organisation with which the board member has an ongoing substantial commercial or professional interest or employment, with a Crown entity of which they are a board member. Two situations that could create a conflict of interest where Crown entities engage organisations in which board members have such an interest are:

1. Where the organisation has been engaged for a one-off, specific assignment.
2. Where the organisation engaged has an on-going involvement with the Crown entity.

With regard to the first situation, the Minister considers that, provided the concerned board member declares his/her interest in the organisation to be engaged for the assignment and takes the appropriate actions under the Crown Entities Act 2004 (eg refraining from voting), it is unlikely that the organisation need be excluded from undertaking the assignment. To exclude the organisation could unduly penalise organisations from competing for business, especially when they are in highly specialised areas.

However, the Board of the NHC will also need to consider whether the affected board member should be party to the service to be provided by his/her organisation to the NHC. The Minister expects a board member in this situation to distance themselves from the provision of service or advice although, in a highly specialised sector, this may not always be possible. The NHC Board should give careful consideration to a board member's involvement in deliberations on the assignment.

The second situation referred to above causes the Minister greater concern, ie where the organisation engaged has an on-going involvement with the NHC.

The situation can arise from the company engaging, say, legal, accounting or other professional advice or services. Many of these firms are sources for a large number of board members and the potential for conflicts of interest is high.

In principle, the conflict of interest provisions in the Crown Entities Act 2004 should provide adequate direction against allegations of conflicts of interest, but the Minister has additional concerns that those provisions may not entirely remedy the situation. A board member who frequently stands aside from board decision-making places a greater burden on the remainder of the board. This can also deny the board the skills and experience of a board member, which is not (generally speaking) in the best interests of the NHC. There is also potential for the Minister and boards to be significantly distracted by allegations of conflicts. The need to address each allegation can be time-consuming.

Accordingly, the Minister wishes to convey to all board members an expectation that the NHC should not engage in an on-going arrangement with an organisation in which a board member has an interest of the nature outlined in this letter.

The Minister is of the view that the NHC should be beyond reproach. Following the expectations of the Minister described in this statement should ensure that this is so. In the event that exceptions to these measures appear appropriate, they should be referred to the Minister.

*Agreement to Accept Appointment*

Hon Nicola Willis  
Minister of Finance  
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
WELLINGTON 6160

Dear Minister

I acknowledge receipt of your letter offering me appointment as Deputy Chair of the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake (NHC) Board from 1 May 2026, for the remainder of my current term to 30 June 2028.

I confirm my acceptance of this appointment on the terms and conditions of the appointment letter.

I will ensure that I keep myself fully familiar with the obligations and responsibilities of the position, and ensure that the entity has taken any necessary steps to arrange for an indemnity and/or insurance for me in my position as a Deputy Chair.

I undertake to advise you, via the Treasury, of any change in my circumstances that may have an impact on my ability to continue to serve on the NHC Board.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Charles HERCUS

**Date:**

Please return to: [appointments@treasury.govt.nz](mailto:appointments@treasury.govt.nz)