



Office of the Prime Minister

Prime Minister

Minister for National Security and Intelligence

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

21 JUN 2017

Michael MacAskill

Email: fyi-request-5926-f85c1fbb@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: PMO 060-2017

Dear Michael MacAskill

Official Information Act request relating to the audit of any contract funding decisions made by Hon Alfred Ngaro

I refer to your Official Information Act request received on 24 May 2017 which asked:

“On Monday 15 May 2017, during an interview with Guyon Espiner on Radio New Zealand, you gave an undertaking to conduct an audit into ministerial decisions made by Alfred Ngaro, to determine whether any such decisions had been based on the political views of people or agencies seeking government funding.

Accordingly, under the terms of the Official Information Act, I request information on the following matters pertaining to that audit:

- (1) Who was appointed to conduct this audit?*
- (2) Under what terms of reference was the audit to be conducted?*
- (3) When was the audit scheduled to be completed?*
- (4) If the audit has been completed,*
 - (4a) What information was reviewed and sources interviewed?*
 - (4b) What were its conclusions?*
 - (4c) What actions were taken as a result?*
 - (4d) How have the findings been disseminated?”*

In a press conference held on 15 May 2017, the Prime Minister stated that he had asked the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) to have a look at Alfred Ngaro’s funding decisions to check there had been no political interference. This transcript is publicly available on the Beehive website at: <https://beehive.govt.nz/feature/beehive-press-conference>.

The purpose of this investigation was to provide reassurance for the Prime Minister that any contracts signed by Minister Ngaro were appropriate. Given the urgency of the matter, DPMC officials contacted the relevant agencies to check whether any contracts had been signed and sought responses from those agencies over one business day on 15 May 2017. Accordingly, this was not a formal investigation or audit, and no terms of reference were developed.

Please find enclosed a copy of the relevant emails between this Office and DPMC. This consists of an email I sent on 15 May 2017 to DPMC officials and copied to a member of staff in this Office together with the responses from DPMC officials to that email. Some names and contact details have been withheld under the following sections of the Official Information Act 1982:

- Section 9(2)(a) as withholding the information is necessary “to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.”
- Section 9(2)(g)(i) as withholding the information is necessary to “maintain the effective conduct of public affairs...”

Where the information has been withheld, no public interest in releasing the withheld information has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding it.

As is evident in the enclosed email correspondence, DPMC was advised that Minister Ngaro had not signed off any contracts in his portfolio areas. Minister Ngaro had undertaken some trustee and board appointment processes and DPMC was advised these appointments were all in order. This is the only information held by this Office identified as relevant to the investigation undertaken by DPMC.

You are entitled to ask the Ombudsman to review this response under section 28(3) of the Act. You can contact the Ombudsman online via the Ombudsman website, by email (info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by post to The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143. Further details can be found on the Ombudsman website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely



Wayne Eagleson
Chief of Staff

Enc: Email correspondence (15 May 2017) between the Prime Minister's Office and DPMC

From: [REDACTED] [DPMC] [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 15 May 2017 1:48 p.m.
To: [REDACTED] [DPMC] [REDACTED] Wayne Eagleson
[REDACTED] [DPMC] [REDACTED]
Cc: Anneliese Parkin [DPMC] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[Office of the Prime Minister] [REDACTED] Andrew Kibblewhite [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Request from the PM

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi all,

I've spoken to MSD and Treasury about social housing and emergency housing contracts, and they have advised that Minister Ngaro has not signed off **any** contracts in these areas.

In his capacity as associate Minister, however, Minister Ngaro will have seen high level details of contracts entered into, and does meet regularly with providers.

From: [REDACTED] [DPMC]
Sent: Monday, 15 May 2017 12:40 p.m.
To: [REDACTED] [DPMC] [REDACTED] ^Parliament: Wayne Eagleson
[REDACTED] [DPMC] [REDACTED]
Cc: Anneliese Parkin [DPMC] [REDACTED] ^Parliament: [REDACTED]
[Office of the Prime Minister] [REDACTED] Andrew Kibblewhite [DPMC]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Request from the PM

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Wayne,

Similarly, I've spoken to Ministry of Pacific Peoples' senior management and have been advised that Minister Ngaro has not had had responsibility for signing off any contracts in that portfolio since his

appointment.

There are a number of appointments either complete or in process, and MPP advise that all of these are in order. I've provided some brief details below:

- **National Pacific Radio Trust – Proposed Appointments** – these are joint appointments by Minister Ngaro and Barry. MPP and MCH provided the list of names, Minister Ngaro agreed, and Minister Barry has yet to respond.
- **Pacific Business Trust** – Proposed Appointments currently being considered
- **Queen's Birthday Honours 2017** – Minister Ngaro on MPP advice suggested two names.
- **Minister's Advisory Council** – placed on hold for a year on MPP officials' advice.

I'll have information on social and emergency housing contracts through shortly.

From: [REDACTED] [DPMC]
Sent: Monday, 15 May 2017 11:58 a.m.
To: ^Parliament: Wayne Eagleson [REDACTED] [DPMC]
[REDACTED] [DPMC]
Cc: Anneliese Parkin [DPMC] [REDACTED] ^Parliament: [REDACTED]
[Office of the Prime Minister] [REDACTED] Andrew Kibblewhite [DPMC]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Request from the PM

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Wayne

I've checked with DIA senior management on the queries in respect of the Community and Voluntary Sector Portfolio. They've checked their records and I'm advised that Minister Ngaro has not had responsibility for signing off any contracts in the Community and Voluntary Sector portfolio since his appointment.

I also asked about appointments made by the Minister. I'm advised that Minister Ngaro made six appointments to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Board, but these were simply signing off recommendations made to the previous Minister that had not been signed prior to the change of minister. The Minister also made one reappointment to the Charities Registration Board, which was an extension of an existing member recommended by the Department.

Cheers [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Policy Advisory Group

Department of the Prime Minister and
Cabinet

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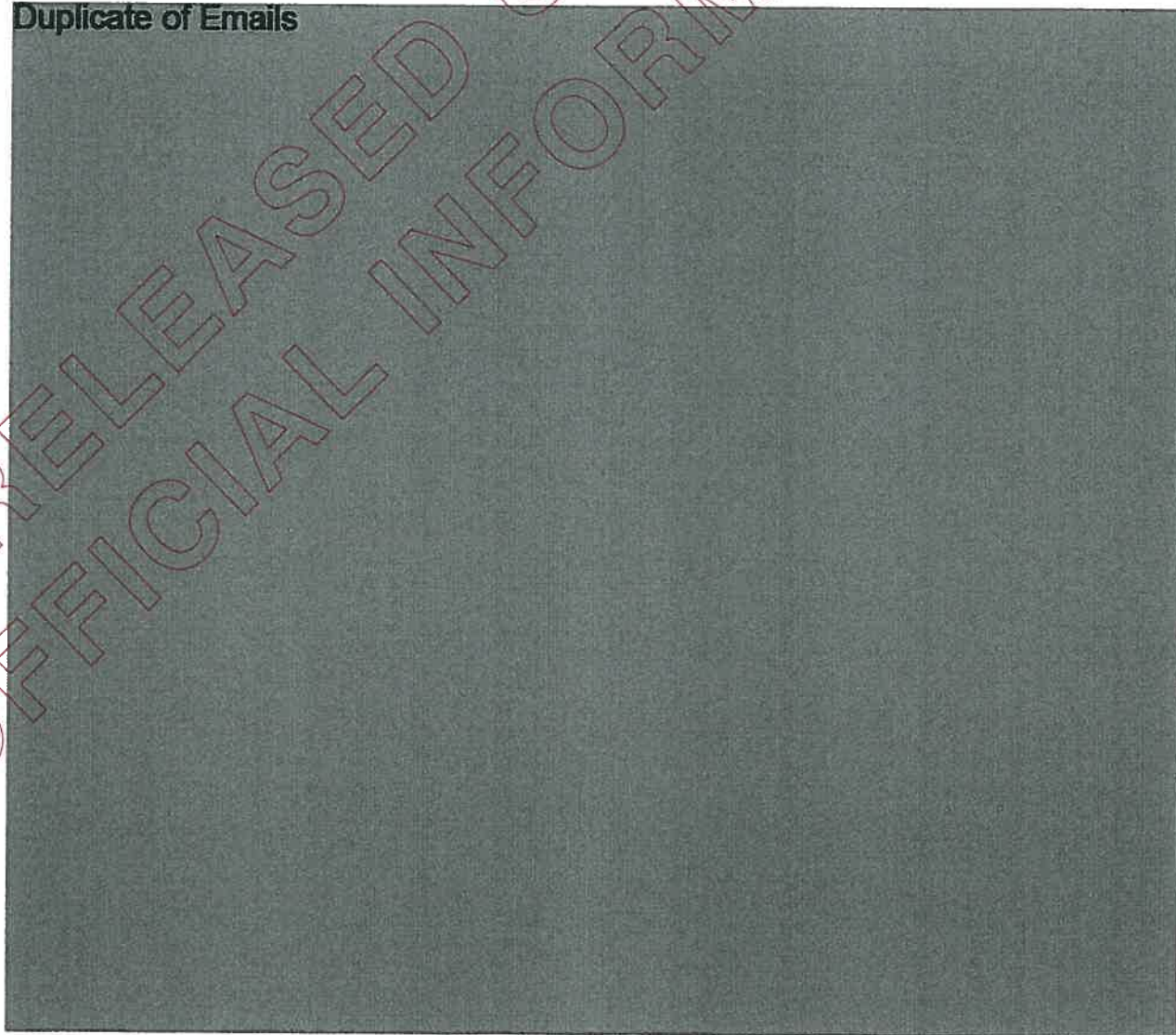


DEPARTMENT
of the PRIME MINISTER
and CABINET



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Duplicate of Emails



From: [REDACTED] [DPMC]
Sent: Monday, 15 May 2017 8:41 a.m.
To: ^Parliament: Wayne Eagleson [REDACTED] [DPMC]
[REDACTED]; [REDACTED] [DPMC]
Cc: Anneliese Parkin [DPMC] [REDACTED] ^Parliament: [REDACTED]
[Office of the Prime Minister]; Andrew Kibblewhite [DPMC]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Request from the PM

Hi Wayne,
Noted, we'll obviously get on to this urgently, and update you during the day.

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: Wayne Eagleson [REDACTED]
Date: Monday, 15 May 2017, 8:37 AM
To: [REDACTED] [DPMC], [REDACTED] [DPMC]
[REDACTED] [DPMC]
Cc: Anneliese Parkin [DPMC] [REDACTED] ^Parliament: [REDACTED]
[Office of the Prime Minister]; Andrew Kibblewhite [DPMC]
[REDACTED]
Subject: Request from the PM

Hi [REDACTED] and all,

You will have seen reports of Minister Ngaro's comments made yesterday.

On Morning Report this morning the PM was asked whether he would look over any social housing contracts for which the Minister has responsibility to satisfy himself that the Minister hasn't made inappropriate decisions/actions. The PM said he would.

We would like DPMC to check with the relevant agencies a) what contracts if any Minister Ngaro has had responsibility for signing off on since becoming a Minister in December 2016 and b) if there are any such contracts, whether the Minister followed officials advice in signing off the contracts and whether there is anything out of the ordinary in those contracts and/or the way

they were handled.


Given the relatively short time frame we are talking about, our anticipation is that DPMC will be able to review this material today ahead of the PM's press conference.

For completeness, while the focus is on Social Housing can we also look at the Minister's Pacific People's and Community and Voluntary Sector portfolios as well.

Happy to discuss.

Regards, Wayne

Wayne Eagleson
Chief of Staff
Office of the Prime Minister


Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT