



26 JUL 2018

Zane Collins
Fyi-request-8199-591f1ff8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Collins

Regarding your Official Information Act 1982 Request

I refer to your email of 2 July 2018 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about the independent panel set to examine the 2014 family justice reforms. You have asked when this is expected to happen and who will serve on the panel.

It is my intention that an independent panel of three members will consider the impacts of the 2014 family justice system reforms.

The membership of the panel is almost finalised, and I expect its work to begin as soon as the appointments have been approved by Cabinet. I expect the panel will take a human rights perspective when conducting its work, including considering the rights of women, men and children.

The panel will be supported by an expert reference group and a secretariat from the Ministry of Justice. The reference group will include experts in domestic violence and paediatric/child development, as well as legal experts.

I can provide some more general information on the panel's work, which may be of interest to you.

In 2014, changes were made to the family justice system that altered the way disputes about care arrangements for children are made after couples separate. I expect the panel to focus on the effectiveness of those changes in protecting the interests of children when resolving disputes about their care or contact. This will include looking at both in-court and out-of-court processes for ensuring decisions are made that are consistent with the welfare and best interests of the children concerned. I am particularly interested in the panel engaging with people who have first-hand experience of the family justice system, and anticipate the panel will announce how it will engage with them in due course.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and I trust this response answers your request.

However, if you are not satisfied with my response, you have the right under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act to complain to the Ombudsman. Contact details for the Office of the Ombudsmen are available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large loop at the top, followed by a series of connected strokes that form the letters 'A', 'L', and 'L'.

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Justice