

12 June 2019

Martin van Beynen
Senior Investigations Reporter
Fairfax Media NZ
martin.vanbeynen@fairfaxmedia.co.nz

REF: OIA-5142

Dear Martin

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 15 May 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

We note from the: 2017/18 Annual review of the New Zealand Transport Agency - NZ Transport Agency, responses to written questions 1-112 that NZTA has notified a number of conflicts of interest by senior staff. We request more details about three of the conflicts.

1. The first is in regard to a senior staff member who is also a rideshare company shareholder/director which bid via Auckland Transport for NZTA funding.

Please advise: who was the staff member and what was their role? what is the name of the rideshare company? how much funding did it apply for and when? was it granted? what did NZTA do to ensure there was no conflict of interest?

2. We note another senior staff member's partner was entering funding applications for a district council. Again who was the staff member and what was their role? Please detail the funding applications entered by the staff member's partner and received by NZTA? How many were granted? Which council did the partner work for? How did NZTA ensure there was no conflict?

3. Another staff member was the chair of a tribal parliament involved in a project under construction. Who was the staff member and what was their role? What was the project and how much NZTA funding was put into it? What was the "tribal parliament and what is the staff member's role in the parliament? How did NZTA ensure there was no conflict?

Question 1:

In order to ensure the conflict was managed appropriately, the staff member was not permitted to participate in business cases or activities relating to ridesharing. The staff member was required to keep their manager informed of any dealings with Auckland Transport. The staff member confirmed that they had not obtained any information at NZ Transport Agency that other applicants hadn't received.

The staff member's bid via Auckland Transport for NZ Transport Agency funding was unsuccessful. The staff member no longer works at the NZ Transport Agency.

I am unable to respond to the remaining parts of this question, as withholding the information requested is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

Question 2:

In order to ensure the conflict was managed appropriately, the staff member was not permitted to sign off any of the district council's claims. This responsibility was transferred to Investment Advisors across Northland and Auckland.

I am unable to respond to the remaining parts of this question, as withholding the information requested is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

Question 3:

In order to ensure the conflict was managed appropriately, the staff member agreed with the NZ Transport Agency Chief Executive not to be involved in any matters relating to this Iwi – both at a relationship and project level. These were managed by senior staff across the Agency including the local Portfolio Manager, Senior Manager Maori, Senior Manager Safety and Environment, Senior Manager Strategy Policy & Planning and others, as appropriate. If any discussions were held at leadership team meetings about the Iwi and its subsidiary company/ies, the staff member would disclose their conflict of interest and appropriate action would be taken at the time, including leaving the meeting.

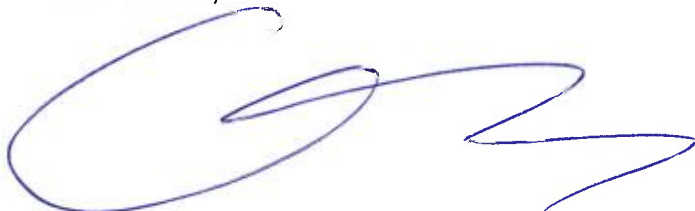
I am unable to respond to the remaining parts of this question, as withholding the information requested is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider necessity to protect privacy is outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold this information. You can find the contact details for the Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

If you would like to discuss this reply with the NZ Transport Agency, please contact Andy Knackstedt, Senior Manager, Media by email to anderew.knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Giles Southwell
General Manager Corporate Services